



Col. Arthur D. Simons Center  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

# InterAgency Journal

## What “Right” Looks Like in the Interagency: A Commander’s Perspective

*William “Kip” Ward*

## Interagency Cooperation: An Ambassador’s Perspective

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## Learning the Hard Way: Lessons From Complex Operations

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## Interagency Collaboration on the High Seas

*Brian Wilson*

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## ***InterAgency Journal***

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# What “Right” Looks Like in the Interagency: *A Commander’s Perspective*

**by William “Kip” Ward**

Since the time of the Presidential announcement that the Department of Defense (DoD) was establishing the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), touted as an interagency command with a mission, purpose, and composition unlike any previous military command, it has drawn a lot of attention. It is true that USAFRICOM is markedly different from other geographic combatant commands (COCOMs), such as U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) or U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM). Rather than interagency, USAFRICOM might better be termed interagency-oriented because of its design charter that emphasized support to an integrated “3-D” approach of diplomacy, development, and defense activities. This approach recognizes that the efforts of the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the DoD are mutually supportive and complementary.

The design charter included key non-DoD members serving in leadership and advisory positions within the command to operationalize the concepts of diplomacy, development, and defense activities. Some functions that other non-DoD agencies provided were now leveraged through a robust, liaison network. The command’s initial organizational design and modifications over the past two years demonstrate how to effectively organize to achieve unified action across the U.S. government.

This article will present a brief introduction of how DoD built USAFRICOM to institutionalize interagency perspectives into its mission and activities. DoD has made progress, but there is still much to do, and further progress will require more robust resourcing of this unique COCOM. The article will then address five important functions of a cross-agency nature that are beyond the scope of current COCOMs.

## **Background**

DoD designed USAFRICOM to account for the unique strategic environment in Africa. The continent and its island nations face country-specific and transnational threats and challenges

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that span the full spectrum of irregular, asymmetric, and catastrophic challenges, such as government instability, failed and failing states, food insecurity, corruption, atrocities, terrorism, piracy, trafficking, disease, and expansive ungoverned spaces. However, Africa also offers tremendous opportunities for greater diplomatic, economic, and developmental relationships with the U.S. African leaders want African solutions to African problems, and it remains clear that any approach that portends a unilateral, military approach will not be well received.

### **Before USAFRICOM, interagency structures and linkages within COCOMs were ad hoc and tended to focus on specific matters...**

These challenges and opportunities are very broad and inherently long-term in nature and, thus, not conducive to traditional military solutions. So the initial concepts of the command included a greater orientation toward interagency perspectives. Before USAFRICOM, interagency structures and linkages within COCOMs were ad hoc and tended to focus on specific matters, such as USSOUTHCOM's Joint Interagency Task Force-South's counterdrug focus. This specific-focus approach would not have been an effective model to further U.S. interests in Africa, as nearly all COCOM activities there have cross-agency involvement or implications. DoD had to institutionalize the interagency orientation for USAFRICOM.

USAFRICOM's mission focuses primarily on building partner security capacity in order for partners to provide for their own internal and external security issues. To provide this

capacity, the command adopted a functional organizational design that fostered security force assistance activities. The design called for a blend of civilian expertise integral to the staff to foster longer-term relationships and sustain continuity of effort. Using civilian expertise mitigates the inherent turbulence of military rotations. Civilian experts include senior officers from State and USAID, as well as a senior Foreign Service officer who serves as the civilian deputy to the commander. Additional personnel from other U.S. government agencies are integrated throughout the staff.

The enhanced information sharing and collaboration brought about by this structure is a step forward toward institutionalizing interagency-orientation within the DoD. The interagency staff members offer non-DoD perspectives, ideally during the initial planning stages of activities, and foster a climate conducive to looking at Africa's security from a holistic perspective. The combination of diplomacy, development, and defense activities provide a unique opportunity to maximize effectiveness and efficiency.

In terms of overall mission and activities, USAFRICOM must still possess the inherent capabilities of a COCOM for the full spectrum and range of military operations. It does not plan, direct, or control the activities of any other agency. Rather, it informs and coordinates its efforts with the diplomatic and developmental efforts, while developing feasible, supportable, and executable military activities. The command exercises control only over DoD programs and activities and serves in a traditional support and advisory role to other agencies, especially U.S. embassy country teams. This is in keeping with approaches in other COCOMs. Striking this balance is necessary, as DoD does not empower the command to take a leading position in matters of policy and development. Instead, as USAFRICOM formed and matured, the command saw that many of these functions

are appropriately integrated at the national level through enhanced interagency processes with inherent ability to decide and direct the diplomacy, development, and defense activities.

At the same time, the command learned many lessons in developing an interagency orientation at the COCOM level. The remainder of this article will present these lessons along with five broad areas where opportunities exist to further the institutionalization of interagency-oriented approaches.

## Integration

Reflecting on my time in Sarajevo and working with Jim Locher (one of the authors of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols legislation) as we worked the new security reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there was a clear distinction between having joint structures and culturally embracing jointness. For the DoD, the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols legislation introduced the structures, but it was only the beginning of the process of achieving jointness. One factor that ultimately facilitated the associated cultural changes was placing the joint structures—the Joint Staff, the COCOMs, and the joint supporting elements—at the top level of the defense hierarchy. Generations of joint leaders asserted greater authority in charting the overall direction of the U.S. military, and over time, the added value of integration became apparent to the point where many of today's service members no longer question it.

At the time of concept development for a new COCOM for Africa in 2006, there was increasing interest in pursuing a similar institutionalized path for interagency integration. Operationalizing that concept was one of several major tasks for the Implementation Planning Team, an interagency group chartered to develop the plan for establishing the command. Meanwhile, USAFRICOM's establishment attracted the attention of groups, such as Jim Locher's Project on National Security Reform,

who were interested in seeing the development of true interagency structures and saw USAFRICOM as an opportunity and a test case. As a result, speculation and rumors grew about the details of the command's interagency make-up, including postulations for up to 25 percent non-DoD civilians within the structure. Other estimates publicly discussed ranged from 20 to 100 personnel.

Unfortunately, too many latched on to the numbers as the measure of interagency orientation rather than the added value to the COCOM's planning and activities. Certainly, the larger estimates of interagency staffing were infeasible, as few other departments had the resources to provide a robust presence. Instead, each agency had to be engaged deliberately in order to sell the concept, determine the levels of staffing the agency could absorb, and decide on the functions the staff would perform. This last point cannot be overstated—U.S. government

**...U.S. government agencies other than the DoD are strapped for personnel and simply cannot afford to provide large numbers of its members outside the agency.**

agencies other than the DoD are strapped for personnel and simply cannot afford to provide large numbers of its members outside the agency. The military is a manpower-intensive organization compared to other federal agencies. In terms of U.S. employees, DoD is about 100 times larger than the State Department and more than 1,000 times larger than USAID.

On the other hand, the integration of members of other agencies within the staff versus having them serve merely in liaison

roles presented a step forward. The inclusion of these interagency members in operational and planning teams brought important perspectives on how to nest the command's military activities more effectively with the efforts of other agencies, particularly in civil-military activities. USAFRICOM cultivated relationships with partner agencies, which increased the willingness of these agencies to provide personnel. From the agencies' perspective, the downside of forfeiting a highly-skilled worker for extended periods of time was offset by their ongoing relationship with USAFRICOM. Some agencies were able to permanently assign personnel immediately, while others could only send personnel on a

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temporary basis for limited periods until they were comfortable with a more formal and enduring arrangement. In the end, USAFRICOM sustained between 20–30 interagency members from 7–10 non-DoD agencies during its first three years of existence. An additional 8–10 temporary-duty members were routinely in the headquarters representing another 2–5 agencies during this period.

The limits on resources available to other agencies will continue to constrain them in the near term. To ensure these agencies continue to provide personnel to USAFRICOM, they must be satisfied that providing personnel does not just add value to the USAFRICOM effort, but

also adds to their value as agencies. In some cases, this means that roles and responsibilities of non-DoD personnel will evolve over time, and the set of participating agencies may grow or shrink. Absent true institutionalization and adequate provision of such staffing at the agency level, the levels of interagency-orientation at USAFRICOM, much less other COCOMs, will likely remain more ad hoc than hoped.

## **Strategic Communication**

Strategic communication remains a serious weakness of the U.S. government. The explosion of media forums, technology innovations, the news cycle, and the cyber world have created an environment where messaging, regardless of purpose, has become considerably more complex. As a result, the U.S. government often fails to set the strategic dialogue at the speed of the information environment and to be sufficiently informed for all government institutions to send clear, synchronized, integrated, and timely messages. The U.S. government is wedded to an analog process in a digital age, which usually finds it reactively versus proactively focused. The interagency processes to develop, vet, and decide policy and messages is not keeping pace with this cycle. Likewise, the government has a tendency to over-communicate, react to every event, and create issues when none exist. Adversaries and competitors exploit weakness in this area because they can quickly and efficiently vet and release their narratives or messages, thus beating the U.S. inside the information cycle.

After 9/11, the DoD sought to establish a strategic communication capability in the context of defining what many called the War on Terrorism. This capability was analogous to the Cold War-era U.S. Information Agency (USIA), but the initiative was widely rejected for fear it might restrict the media and become a propaganda tool.

Regardless, the lack of narrative is itself a

major challenge. A narrative is an expression of the U.S.'s identity, history, role in the world, and future. While one may assume that policy statements expressed at the highest levels of the Executive should suffice, such policy statements should be rationally derivable from the narrative. So too would all other communications. A narrative internalized across the government would reduce the need to explicitly synchronize messages. It would amplify precisely those values and messages upon which all Americans agree, regardless of whom they vote for or how they pray. The former USIA was adept at remaining apolitical as it communicated America to the world, and U.S. military members pride themselves for staying out of party politics and representing Americans from all backgrounds and walks of life.

One might look back to the “simpler” days of the Cold War and claim today’s complex environment makes developing such a narrative impossible. This is untrue. Instead, the U.S. must double its efforts in this area. Much of the narrative from the Cold War that expressed America’s values and beliefs in freedom still applies. Developing that narrative and applying it must be an interagency effort, whether led by a new USIA-like agency or not.

Each agency should embrace and apply that narrative in its own way, but it should remain synchronized at every echelon. COCOMs, such as USAFRICOM, should continue to collaborate and harmonize specific themes and messages with its partners at State, country teams in Africa, DoD and the Joint Staff, and appropriate State Department regional and functional bureaus. Providing a national narrative would eliminate the difficult process of generating the message and give this process a solid head start.

## **Contributing to Policy Development**

Policy development is a vital process that is by nature complex and difficult. Discussions

on improving the interagency process normally focus on the government’s problems of framing timely, understandable, strategic policy; developing executable directives and decisions; and managing and prioritizing resources. Having coherent, flexible, and adaptable strategic policies should drive well-reasoned and appropriate diplomacy, development, and defense activities supported by appropriate resources. Because of its many influences on international players, one of the unique challenges of policy development is its iterative; multi-tiered; and, in some cases, “stove-piped” processes that rely heavily on stakeholder perceptions. The process is not perfect, and sometimes it fails to address important regional matters with timely national policy decisions. This failure can lead to missed opportunities to influence or support partners or leverage fleeting situations. A second significant challenge ensues when a policy decision is

**Because of its many influences on international players, one of the unique challenges of policy development is its iterative; multi-tiered; and, in some cases, “stove-piped” processes that rely heavily on stakeholder perceptions.**

not sufficiently supported with resources for effective implementation.

One of the early discussions within the command was how to help mitigate these challenges. In declaring USAFRICOM an interagency-oriented command, the premise was that integrating multiple U.S. government agencies into the command would result in greater collaboration. Building consensus quickly could lead to an accelerated policy

decision-making effort. This fusion of effort would strengthen the case for quick decisions and providing necessary resources, as much of the analysis and deliberate planning would theoretically have already been done.

While these ideas were attractive, they also generated a considerable amount of criticism and concern about loss of control, decentralized decision making, and undue influence on the application of resources. USAFRICOM's formation occurred during a period of DoD resource supremacy (contributed in part by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan) and concerns over the "militarization of foreign policy," a theme the command continues to confront. From the beginning, the command reassured U.S. government partners that it played strictly a supporting role to the established

a national-level challenge.

## **Resourcing**

Unquestionably, the distribution of resources among U.S. government agencies has been a topic of serious discussion in recent years. Secretary of Defense Gates has testified to Congress and made numerous public statements decrying the imbalance of resources that disfavor agencies doing diplomatic and developmental work overseas. Also, there is limited flexibility in the process of building new programs to address partner security force assistance requirements that arise within the normal budgeting cycle, such as when policy decisions are made that allow the U.S. government to immediately engage with a new partner.

Today's strategic environment includes threats to stability and security that cannot be addressed by defense means alone. Often, turning requirements into security assistance programs in Africa requires considering options that combine defense (Title 10) and non-defense (Title 22) appropriations. Rarely are these arrangements sustainable over time. For example, the at-sea training platform, Africa Partnership Station, USAFRICOM's first major security assistance program, involved the cobbling of over a dozen different funding sources from Titles 10 and 22 to resource its first three years of missions. This process made administering the program a challenge until it was established as a program of record in 2010. This strict compartmentalization of funding sources can impede unity of effort, especially since much of the Title 22 budget tends to be earmarked for very specific purposes by Congress. The answer is not to call for changes to the legal differentiation between Title 10 and Title 22, which exists for important historic reasons regarding the separation of military and non-military matters. Rather, other U.S. government agencies need both adequate

### **Today's strategic environment includes threats to stability and security that cannot be addressed by defense means alone.**

policymaking processes and fully respected the authorities vested in other agencies. Since 2007, the command has maintained it has no policy development role; however, it does see a role in advising and helping to inform policy when appropriate through the Secretary of Defense, who does have a deliberate role in the formulation of policy.

At the COCOM level, USAFRICOM has worked to ensure the process is better informed, so the best and most timely decisions can be made. Collaboration has been good among USAFRICOM, U.S. embassies and country teams in Africa, and the Africa bureaus of other agencies. However, the overall prioritization and timeliness of African-related policy decisions is

resources and increased flexibility and versatility to turn short-fused opportunities into potentially long-term and successful programs that when combined with DoD efforts represents a holistic approach to security among U.S. partners.

The U.S. government must recognize how its internal processes affect its ability to support partner nations seeking security force assistance. When requirements are given that involve the services of both DoD Title 10 and State Department Title 22 programs, the barriers between those sources become all too visible to U.S. partners. Federal bureaucracy can cause U.S. agencies to appear unresponsive and unsympathetic, sometimes even pit one agency against another or cause an agency to try to convince a partner to adjust its requirements for the agency's convenience. Greater unity of effort should encourage better communications with partners and shield them from overexposure to internal program development processes. U.S. agencies can then build greater trust and confidence in their ability to deliver security assistance.

Resource management oversight, however, should remain at agency or interagency level. Prioritization, flexibility, and the level of decision-making are the main concerns. As an example, USAFRICOM's only sustained troop presence in Africa is the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. Its mission is to counter violent extremism by helping build partner capacity in the ten countries of the Horn of Africa. For other activities, USAFRICOM often requests forces assigned to other COCOMs. As forces must be globally available, the command must balance gaining reliable access to the required forces and capabilities to meet the mission against the competing demands of the commander who has command and control of those forces on a day-to-day basis. Commands without assigned forces tend not to gain the required capability based on competing priorities. This inequity in

the system degrades the ability of the command to meet its objectives, especially in flexible, timely ways.

The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) under USAID is a good example of how things can and should be done. OFDA personnel are assigned to a particular location but are always globally available whenever a major disaster strikes and U.S. policy decisions direct assistance. OFDA personnel at USAFRICOM have participated in disaster response activities in the Republic of Georgia and Haiti.

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## Geography

A common theme in discussions of broader interagency integration is the desire to standardize how U.S. government agencies geographically subdivide responsibilities for their programs and activities outside the U.S. For example, the State Department established an African Affairs Bureau that addresses sub-Saharan issues, while the north African nations and the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East were included in the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau. On the other hand, USAFRICOM addresses DoD issues for all African nations (including Egypt for matters pertaining to the African continent). Hence, USAFRICOM works with two regional bureaus at State, one of which has priorities elsewhere. Meanwhile, all the other U.S. government agencies divide their global responsibilities differently, raising the question of whether or

not the plethora of mismatched boundaries adds unnecessary complexity to interagency efforts.

The answer is, no. Agencies should inculcate a culture that avoids preoccupation with seams. The DoD has been moving in this direction for some time. For example, the level of coordination between U.S. Central Command and USAFRICOM in addressing security issues between the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula has been outstanding. Cultivating close relationships with both the African and Near Eastern Bureaus allowed USAFRICOM to develop and enhance counterterrorism programs and activities involving both Maghreb and Sahel nations at the diplomatic and defense levels. Programs and activities involving all Mediterranean countries, including those aligned with USAFRICOM, USCENTCOM, and USEUCOM, have continued uninterrupted.

A particularly useful vignette surrounds the question of Egypt at the time of USAFRICOM's founding. A healthy debate ensued as to whether Egypt should be aligned with USCENTCOM or USAFRICOM, and there were great concerns over the second- and third-order effects of the decision with respect to the COCOM. The concerns were unfounded. After the decision was made to align Egypt with USCENTCOM, early contacts with the Egyptians led to a simple solution that all parties were comfortable with. Egypt would address Middle Eastern interests with USCENTCOM and African interests with USAFRICOM. The seam melted away quietly.

### **A Step in the Right Direction**

As with Goldwater-Nichols' impact on jointness, interagency integration is about how disparate agencies work together to accomplish their respective missions under unity of effort. The interagency-oriented approach of USAFRICOM was a step in the right direction, helping to meet the defense needs of African partners in ways better informed by the efforts of other U.S. government agencies. It also highlighted some opportunities at the national level that if leveraged can bring this interagency orientation more broadly across the government and improve U.S. responsiveness to the needs of its partners. **IAJ**

# Interagency Cooperation: *An Ambassador's Perspective*

**by Thomas J. Miller**

In 2011, it is difficult to think of any event or issue that is any longer confined to the domain, authority, and purview of a single agency in the U.S. government. This is a far cry from the State Department I entered as a Foreign Service officer (FSO) in 1976, where the majority of work was restricted to State Department players, there was little interagency cooperation or input, and perspective seldom went beyond the department. As the Indochina analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) and at the U.S. Consulate in Chiang Mai, Thailand, my entire audience was the State Department front office, the functional/geographical bureau, or the embassy in Bangkok. As an INR analyst, I worked on National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs)—definitely an interagency product—but even then, I would offer the INR perspective on a take-it-or-leave-it basis (and take a footnote if I did not agree with the NIE's conclusions). Similarly, in Chiang Mai, other agencies were represented, but while State Department personnel provided some administrative support, these other agencies pretty much did their own thing, with little interaction with the consulate.

The world has become more complex and analysts now deal with issues that were not even on their scope 35 years ago. FSOs now work more closely with other agencies to produce and implement more effective foreign policy. Many books and articles have been written about the need for better interagency cooperation because it is often the lack of such cooperation that undermines the policy. Indeed, the establishment of the Center for Complex Operations and introduction of legislation on interagency professional development by Representatives Ike Skelton and Geoff Davis in the U.S. Congress are just a couple of concrete manifestations of the recognition of the need for better collaboration between the different parts of the U.S. government.

While not claiming to be an expert on the subject of interagency cooperation, my sense from reading some of the literature is that it is heavy on theory and rather thin on practice. It

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also sometimes mistakenly presupposes that simply identifying the problems will lead to solutions. My experience during three decades of government work and the last six years of collaborating with the U.S. government as head of three international non-profit organizations is that solutions are not simply a matter of accurate diagnosis. Rather, deeply held mindsets based on an agency's parochial views of other agencies' positions and perspectives have handicapped interagency coordination across the board.

Though not any more objective than those

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involved in non-State Department agencies, I have given a lot of thought to the importance of interagency cooperation in the formation of good policy and implementation of that policy. Fifteen years ago, I lectured on the importance of interagency cooperation to new officers at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute. I based my lectures on my own practical experience and perspective of what worked and what did not. However, in the more complex world of 2011, I offer an updated version of my personal ten practical suggestions. I do so knowing that many readers of this article will be members of the military services and will have a very different set of experiences. Hopefully this article can be the start of a dialogue facilitated by the Simons Center in which different foreign policy players in the U.S. government will

come to a better understanding of their partners' perspectives. In turn, I hope this increased understanding will lead to closer collaboration in the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy.

## **Ten Simple Thoughts for Improving Interagency Cooperation**

### **1) The interagency process can be a force multiplier.**

All foreign policy issues have dimensions that extend beyond the traditional State Department diplomatic practice. For instance, solutions regarding transnational terrorism demand not only a perspective from traditional diplomacy but also, *inter alia*, from the military, development experts (U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID] and others), the Justice Department, the FBI, Homeland Security, and the intelligence community. Indeed, the State Department's recently issued Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) recognizes that the co-equal legs of dealing with national security challenges are defense, diplomacy, and development. Interagency cooperation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective policy because since September 11th, 2001, an entire world of new actors plays a very important role. From my own experiences since leaving the State Department, I can attest to the importance of the non-profit sector as key actors in the effort to make the environment less hospitable to terrorists.

We have seen that effective cooperation can be a force multiplier relating to U.S. assistance to the agricultural sector of Afghanistan. USAID, the Departments of Agriculture, State, and Defense, and a number of lesser players, all mirrored by their parent agencies in Washington, have been involved in various efforts to aid Afghan agriculture. Recognizing that such complexity can either be a divider

or multiplier, the ambassador very wisely appointed an agricultural czar to coordinate these disparate actors in order to maximize the chances of making such cooperation a force multiplier.

Whoever is sitting at the head of the table or leading an interagency effort should be inclusive and recognize that other agencies within the government as well as players outside the government can add value if the leader creates a welcoming environment and values each agency's input. Policy has much less chance of succeeding without active buy-in from all agencies involved in the project. Although easy to propose, obtaining buy-in is often difficult to accomplish, as the various players come with different outlooks and agendas. If they are to contribute, they have to be convinced that these perspectives and agendas will be heard and respected.

## **2) An ambassador should never have to invoke the authority granted to him/her.**

After World War II, it became established practice that the State Department be the lead agency for all non-military foreign policy matters. This notion was institutionalized over many years and in theory not seriously challenged. Decades ago, a practice was set in motion presenting the U.S. ambassador with a letter from the President that designated the ambassador and the State Department as the lead agency in overseeing all foreign policy matters except those involving the theater military commander.

Unfortunately, some ambassadors believe this is an iron-clad rule without exception and have resorted to using this letter as a blunt hammer with others in the embassy. Using this approach can sometimes make the collaboration process go astray. The reality is that other agencies will be more cooperative if they are asked and not ordered to implement a policy. Ambassadors should recognize and work with

the reality that other agency heads have two bosses, the ambassador and their parent agency. The challenge for the modern-day ambassador is to lead not by invoking the President's letter but in a manner that helps other agencies realize it is to their best interest to follow his/her lead.

Ambassadors should create a King Arthur round table mentality where no one agency dominates, and input from all is welcome. Invoking a sense of "I'm in charge-ism" will

**Ambassadors should create a King Arthur round table mentality where no one agency dominates, and input from all is welcome.**

quickly lose cooperation. Everyone knows the ambassador has the "letter"; the challenge for an ambassador (or any other agency head if they are chairing the meeting) is never to pull out that letter to justify their authority. This is not unlike the cops with holstered guns on the street—they are most effective if they do not have to draw the revolver.

## **3) You learn more with your eyes and ears than with your mouth.**

Any approach to a problem includes a strategy and a plan before acting. What is not always emphasized is the need to ensure that others have the opportunity to advance their ideas before that strategy and plan are locked in concrete. Leaders should encourage others to state their perspective before offering their own. This process is particularly important if one carries the authority of ambassador or deputy chief of mission, for others around the table might not want to offer differing points of view once those leading the meeting have voiced theirs.

**First and foremost, agency personnel should keep the overall U.S. interest in mind as they work through various issues. This is extremely hard to do as a practical matter.**

#### **4) Park your agency agenda at the door.**

Sometimes people get so hung up in pushing the parochial concerns of their particular agency that they forget the larger objectives of our country. First and foremost, agency personnel should keep the overall U.S. interest in mind as they work through various issues. This is extremely hard to do as a practical matter. One has to go no further than our Congress to witness how often a member will put a particular state's or even district's priority ahead of the broader interest of our country. How many times have we seen unnecessary and expensive weapons systems that the leadership of the Pentagon does not want foisted on them by powerful members of Congress solely because they represent jobs in their district or state? How many times have we seen our foreign aid dollar limited in its effectiveness when a "Buy American" mandate forces us to purchase a much more costly product? How can we justify our efforts to help less developed countries by using a politically driven, heavily subsidized U.S. food aid program that destroys the local market?

I am not advocating people ignore their own particular agency's perspectives, however, I believe they should do their best to keep the larger objective in mind as they work through different options.

#### **5) Sweat the details: Agree on timelines and resources before adjourning the meeting.**

Often interagency meeting participants

argue for hours over different approaches to a difficult problem and then, in an exhausted state, adjourn the meeting once a common overall approach has been decided. Those who do not agree with the conclusions can drag out implementation endlessly if specific timelines and benchmarks are not agreed upon. Similarly, participants can make great decisions but neglect to consider where they will find the resources to implement those decisions. A great decision without the resources to implement is essentially no decision at all. If an agency does not have the proper staff to carry out any decision, it simply will not get done. Too often senior people delegate the issues of timelines and resources to others and then wonder why their decisions were never carried out.

#### **6) Record everything.**

Many interagency discussions occur where there is either no note-taker or the notes are inadequate. It is important to have a note-taker who thoroughly understands both the content and context of the discussion. Meetings recorded by stenographers who can take notes rapidly and verbatim but have no idea about the substance of the discussion often result in notes that make little sense afterwards.

During my time as an ambassador, I would ask one of my more senior people to take notes, and I would try to do likewise. Immediately after the meeting, we would compare our notes and ensure what we had recorded was an accurate and full reflection of the meeting. I would then circulate those notes to key meeting participants and request they respond by a time certain with any comments, corrections, or differences. Following these simple and, some would say, common sense steps can minimize disputes as to what was decided.

#### **7) Share responsibility for the work.**

Often, the person leading the meeting takes

on the lion's share of the preparation, action, and follow-up resulting from the meeting. This is a big mistake for several reasons. First, it often results in a single agency taking on more than it can handle and as a consequence getting second-rate results. Second and even more important, failure to share responsibility for parceling out the work often results in a lack of buy-in from the other agencies. From my experience, when one agency dominates and the other players remain silent, it may indicate the silent players have adopted a passive-aggressive attitude toward the dominant agency, and they will do little to cooperate in the implementation of the decisions made. Often the lead agency is oblivious to this resistance until it is too late to take corrective action. One additional point is that sometimes those who are to implement the policy are not included in the meetings. It is essential that they are fully briefed and made to feel part of the process.

#### **8) Use the chain of command in both directions.**

Interagency disputes should be resolved at the lowest level possible. Too often, the boss will waste scarce time and resources trying to resolve every difference when subordinates could have done so more easily. A micromanager will stifle the initiative of subordinates. Before getting involved, the more senior people should give their subordinates the flexibility and freedom to resolve disputes. Their subordinates should take the initiative by recognizing such differences and attempting to resolve them at their level. If subordinates cannot settle their differences, they should not hesitate to buck it up the chain of command for resolution. I have sometimes noticed a hesitancy to do so because it can be perceived as failure. The boss should make it clear that it is acceptable to kick a problem up the chain of command if those working it cannot resolve it expeditiously.

#### **9) Do not over classify or hide behind a veil of secrecy.**

The entire WikiLeaks episode has focused public attention on the subject of classified information. Reading the stories of many of the State Department cables that have been released, one is struck that much of what has been made public is intuitive and not particularly astonishing. What is surprising is perhaps the fact that we expected far more revelations than have emerged. Indeed, some of the cables have probably been classified at a higher level than warranted. Classification of documents is a necessary element of doing business with sensitive sources involving important issues in

**Interagency disputes should be resolved at the lowest level possible.**

the U.S. government. However, it is occasionally abused in instances where some people are not permitted to be party to a discussion because they either lack the proper clearances or access to the information being considered. Sometimes this is legitimate; other times it is used as an excuse to stifle dissent or exclude people who have other perspectives from a deliberative process.

While volumes could be written about over classifying or improperly classifying information, the point is that the classification of documents should not be used to exclude those in an interagency deliberation who may not possess all the requisite clearances. Doing so is akin to turning off part of one's brain.

#### **10) Wear both your own shoes and the other person's shoes simultaneously.**

It is important for meeting participants,

particularly those leading an interagency deliberation, to constantly stay aware of other participants' positions and the rationale for those positions. Otherwise the meetings will rapidly degenerate into a zero-sum game, and participants will focus on winning for their agencies rather than achieving the objective. Those leading the meeting must be sensitive to the positions of others in the room to avoid some leaving the room believing there may be specific outcomes, while others leave the room scratching their heads and, in the extreme, planning to sabotage the process.

## **Conclusion**

Nothing advocated in this article is either particularly brilliant or surprising. While the purpose of this article is to share some reflections and experiences in making the interagency process work more efficiently and effectively, much of it applies equally to everyday interactions with family and friends. All of the ten points made above are intuitive, but I am struck by how many times rational, intelligent people engaging in an interagency process lose sight of the basic tenets they use on a daily basis in interactions with others.

It is my hope that these points—often learned as a result of my own failures—will be useful suggestions to help others in interagency deliberations. Although written from the perspective of one who worked for the State Department, it is intended for all who are trying to formulate and implement the most effective American foreign policy possible. **IAJ**

# Learning the Hard Way: *Lessons from Complex Operations*

by **Michael Miklaucic**

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Complex operations, where military and civilian personnel work shoulder to shoulder, are the new face of war. The nature of complex national security challenges is inherently multi-dimensional. Success in these operations requires much more than traditional military “lethal” tools—it requires the coordinated application of the full range of national security resources, including economic, diplomatic, developmental, and information resources in addition to the military. Moreover, to be successful in this rapidly changing, high velocity operational environment, U.S. personnel must be adaptable, quick learners. This article examines a sample of issues related to bureaucratic culture and conceptual approaches that impede the learning process particularly, but not exclusively, for U.S. civilians in the complex operations space.

## **Complex Operations**

There is no universally accepted formal definition of complex operations. In the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress defined them as “stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare.” Experience with such operations over the past decade—particularly in but not limited to Afghanistan and Iraq—has forced American practitioners to re-examine their knowledge with respect to the security environment of the 21st century, the nature of contemporary conflict, and the national capacity to articulate and protect the interests of the U.S. At the strategic level, if any single lesson has emerged, it is that the line between war and peace is blurred, if indeed, there is any line at all, and that blurriness exemplifies complex operations.

Disciples of von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu will say this lesson was learned centuries or even

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millennia ago. Indeed many in the U.S. have known this for quite a long time. However the bureaucratic architecture remains structured as though war and peace were separable and independent processes that require separate and autonomous elements of national power. This “bureaucratic stove-piping” is true of both the executive branch as well as the legislative branch, where separate committees of each

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chamber deal with armed services, foreign relations, and appropriations.

Even today, after nearly a decade of the challenges of complex operations, the U.S. remains structured as though war requires military tools and the armed services, while peace requires civilian tools and agencies. This disjunction between form and function has led the U.S. belatedly toward adopting the comprehensive or whole-of-government approach. Sometimes it is referred to as the 3D approach, highlighting diplomacy, defense, and development. Civilian and military organizations now work together to an unprecedented degree, which has led civilians into “non-permissive” theaters where there is no presumption of humanitarian or development space. They are for all practical purposes working in zones of military conflict or active insurgency.

It has also led the U.S. military into

domains traditionally the preserve of civilian agencies, such as development, stabilization, and reconstruction, which in turn has led critics to caution against the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. It is not clear that this is a serious issue beyond the individual bureaucracies involved. Even at the height of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the most critical U.S. foreign policy decisions were driven by civilian leaders, and many were approved by Congress. That the views and guidance of military leaders are sought and given the utmost gravity in times of war should come as no surprise, nor should it be a cause for concern.

Today it might even be argued that the more forceful vector has been the civilianization of the military. With the adoption of Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 in November 2005 and even its watered down September 2009 version, the U.S. military remains committed to “maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.” This brings the U.S. military into the world of “rebuilding basic infrastructure; developing local governance structures; fostering security, economic stability, and development; and building indigenous capacity for such tasks.” Indeed the defense community has been an enthusiastic adapter and gone the furthest in terms of adopting the whole-of-government approach. It is the civilian agencies who continue to lag behind.

As the U.S. enters the second decade of the 21st century, the likelihood of future complex operations appears no less. Though it is not likely the U.S. will soon engage in another full-scale operation such as those in Iraq or Afghanistan, the multi-dimensional nature of national security threats is here to stay, and the approaches must continue to evolve. There has been great deliberation, debate, and discussion in the past decade of lessons learned

in complex operations. Yet despite impressive intellectual prowess and educational attainment, U.S. practitioners do not seem very good at identifying, validating, and institutionalizing actionable lessons that enable the U.S. to consistently improve its execution of complex operations—especially on the civilian side.

## Learning from Experience

To evolve effectively the U.S. must become better at learning from experience. There has been great lamenting at the cost paid for forgetting the counterinsurgency lessons learned long ago in Vietnam. Today there is a lessons learned cottage industry. Unfortunately, persistent stove-piped and dysfunctional bureaucracies compounded by lack of rigor and discipline in learning have handicapped these efforts and resulted in the failure either to articulate clear, actionable lessons or to disseminate what has been learned through hard experience to those who are on the ground executing complex operations.

Despite the desire and profound need to learn from experience in complex operations, no system has been developed to serve this purpose on the civilian side. The key civilian agencies involved in foreign policy in the U.S. —the Departments of State, Treasury, Agriculture, Homeland Security, and Justice and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—do not have robust institutional cultures of learning. Most learning is on the job. It is neither cumulative nor closely related to career development. It is not systematic and tends to be based on personal and anecdotal experience and absorbing the institutional culture of the home organization. Unlike the military, civilians have no doctrine; no accepted tactics, techniques and procedures; and no clear chain of command, so lessons learned are much more difficult to nest institutionally. Moreover, no civilian agency has complex operations as its core mission, so lessons from complex

operations tend to get diluted and blended down into traditional diplomacy, development, and defense core missions.<sup>1</sup>

According to a senior Foreign Service officer at the State Department, “This is an issue for State—that there isn’t any existing institutional architecture—although S/CRS (the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization) is making some headway.”<sup>2</sup> At USAID, the Center for Development Evaluation and Information was dismantled in 2005, effectively destroying the structured lessons learning function that linked field experience

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into a dissemination structure within USAID.\* A key finding of a recent study of monitoring and evaluation practices in both State Department and USAID foreign assistance programs is that: “Evaluations do not contribute to community-wide knowledge. If ‘learning’ takes place, it is largely confined to the immediate operational unit that commissioned the evaluation rather than contributed to a larger body of knowledge on effective policies and programs.”<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. military, by contrast, has a mature and more disciplined approach to learning the lessons of experience embedded in an elaborate institutional system of professional

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\* USAID’s training and lesson learning function had been atrophying for over a decade when it was officially dismantled in 2005. An attempt to re-create or revive the lesson learning and dissemination function within USAID is currently underway.

education. Continuing professional education is now a requirement for advancement within the military services. The various military “schoolhouses” provide ongoing educational opportunities for all levels of Soldier, Seaman, Airman, or Marine. There is nothing comparable on the civilian side and, thus, no method or practice of joint civil military development of lessons. That, in addition to very different

ago resolved these issues.<sup>4</sup>

There is resistance within U.S. civilian agencies to participating in any process that might cast their efforts in a negative light. A recent study by professional foreign assistance program evaluators quotes a respondent as saying: “USAID doesn’t want to know the facts or truth....Branding and success stories are the primary interests.” Of the State Department, they write: “At the Department, the de facto decision has been to not evaluate (their foreign assistance programs).”<sup>5</sup> An unofficial military lexicon defines lessons learned as, “capitalizing on past errors in judgment, material failures, wrong timing, or other mistakes ultimately to improve a situation or system.” Such candid acknowledgement rarely takes place within the civilian agencies.

learning cultures has made civilian-military joint learning problematic.

There are many obstacles to developing an interagency lessons learned function, not the least of which is the persistent bureaucratic resistance to joint action within the civilian agencies. While the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 required and over time improved cooperation and inter-operability among the armed services, no similar dynamic has forced fusion of the civilian agencies, let alone between the civilian and military agencies. To protect the identity of personnel who provide information, some civilian agencies have restrictive rules concerning the sharing of data collected from agency personnel regardless of the reason. There are often competing claims of ownership of information within the agency itself. The more mature military processes long

ago resolved these issues.<sup>4</sup> For just this reason civilians tend to articulate their projects, programs, or other professional objectives such that failure is not really verifiable. A common example from foreign assistance project objectives is “building local capacity.” Building local capacity for development is a laudable activity, but there is no empirical method for determining whether or not the objective has been achieved. Local capacity is not development. It is neither economic growth nor political liberalization. Until tested and proven, the capacity to accomplish such goals is unknown. A local capacity guarantees no particular outcome; it does not even necessarily increase the likelihood of any particular outcome. Lack of precision in identifying objectives leads to a lack of precision in measuring outcomes, which makes it difficult to determine the dynamics of the causal chain. It is precisely an understanding of these dynamics that will improve the likelihood

of successfully adapting to the challenges of complex operations.

More importantly, civilian agencies lack a system to circulate lessons identified and disseminate them through training and education to ensure they inform future effort. Perversely, there is no incentive within the civilian agencies for formal ongoing professional education and training. Indeed the opposite is true. Since promotion is not based on educational or training accomplishments, there is a distinct disadvantage in taking time for training that could be used for climbing the career ladder. Time invested in education and training is time lost.

## Affirmations

Civilian discussions, reports, or lists of lessons learned in complex operations typically include a heavy dose of such nostrums as “we need to achieve unity of effort” or “unity of command” or “we need a better understanding of the human terrain and political context of complex operations.” Another common lesson offered is “no two complex operations are exactly the same.” These lessons are truisms; too self-evident to require much elaboration and well enough established to belie any new claims to discovery. While relevant, they are not lessons learned from complex operations but rather from all conflict or even from life itself.

The principle of unity of command for example was articulated as a “combat principle” as early as 1914 in U.S. Field Service Regulations and should be fully internalized by now. It can hardly be considered a lesson learned from contemporary complex operations. It is more appropriate to consider it a lesson learned long ago that has been affirmed.

Other common examples of contemporary experience affirming lessons that should not require re-learning, yet which are frequently sited as lessons learned include: “We must think outside of the box,” and “Always question

assumptions.” Again, these represent good advice in most situations. It does not hurt to reiterate these principles, but practitioners should not dwell on them, and the U.S. did not need to lose over 5,000 Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan to re-learn these lessons. There is no reason to boast of re-discovering the obvious; it is time to move on.

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## Assumptions

Far more pernicious in their impact are assumptions dressed in “lessons learned clothing.” Through widespread repetition, certain assumptions have attained the status of “conventional wisdom.” In these cases repetition—often of something said by a senior official or highly esteemed expert or an article of faith important to a specific community—replaces corroboration by experience. For example, “the military is best suited to conduct kinetic warfare operations, while development or humanitarian relief is best left to development agencies or NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] that know these fields better and therefore get better results.” How many times

have we heard about schools built by Soldiers in remote locations in Iraq or Afghanistan where there are no teachers or clinics abandoned because there are no doctors or no electricity?

To this valid criticism of military efforts in development and humanitarian relief should be added that the developing world is littered with the detritus of well-intentioned projects

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designed and executed by development professionals. Indeed there is a long litany of far more egregious and damaging projects wholly planned and executed by development professionals. Look for example at the case of the World Bank-driven liberalization of the Mozambique cashew industry. In 1995 international economic development professionals from the World Bank insisted on liberalization measures which within 3 years resulted in closing 10 of Mozambique's 15 sizable cashew processing factories and laying off over 5,000 workers.<sup>7</sup> Or the case of the village mosquito net manufacturer in an impoverished West African country who was put out of business by the free provision of hundreds of mosquito nets by a well-meaning humanitarian NGO.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the global south, you will find abandoned schools, deteriorating roads, dilapidated clinics, and other failed development

projects designed and implemented by the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, USAID, and countless other international organizations and NGOs. "Long-running aid programs have left many African countries mired in poverty. Arguing that the aid may even have retarded progress, some informed voices in poor countries are pleading for an end to the assistance."<sup>9</sup>

The superiority of developmental agencies and NGOs in development work is an unproven assumption. Indeed over the last decade, the military has accumulated unparalleled experience in certain environments and sectors. The military has been providing development assistance in areas civilian development agencies have been unable to reach due to security concerns, in particular, reconstruction and stabilization assistance in Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Philippines, and some countries in the Horn of Africa.

The U.S. military has developed substantial experience in the field of stabilization and reconstruction, and particularly in security sector reform and local law enforcement capacity development in non-permissive environments. Moreover, much of this experience is being captured within the military's disciplined lesson learning process to inform and improve future efforts.<sup>\*\*</sup> One should not forget that historically the U.S. military has been the primary agency in major reconstruction and stabilization efforts, such as in post-World War II Europe and Japan.

Development is a remedy for conflict and will win "hearts and minds" is another fundamental assumption in the complex operations field that has been elevated to the

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*\*\* Examples include Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan; Police Reform Challenges" (2008) and "Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction in a Counterinsurgency" (2006) both cited in Joint Center for Operational Analysis Journal, Spring 2010.*

status of “conventional wisdom” and catalogued as a lesson learned without empirical validation. Evidence from Afghanistan suggests the opposite. “At a time when more aid money is being spent in Afghanistan than ever before, popular perceptions of aid are overwhelmingly negative.”<sup>10</sup> As far back as the early 1960s, the economist Mancur Olson warned that development and, particularly, rapid economic growth, can be a profoundly de-stabilizing force.<sup>11</sup> And yet the U.S. continues to embrace the assumption that development is a remedy for conflict, a tonic for stabilization, and a tool for winning hearts and minds, as though this represents an indisputable lesson learned.

An assumption that has recently developed a wide but cult-like following is that the more institutional inclusion in the analysis, planning, and execution of a complex operation the better. As discussed above, the concepts of comprehensive or whole-of-government approaches to complex operations have emerged and become orthodoxy in both development and military circles, widely proclaimed by secretaries of defense as well as secretaries of state and leaders in the development community. Moreover if whole-of-government is good, whole-of-society must be even better. While these assertions may be true, they have not been corroborated persuasively. Analysis tends to begin from the assumption that the comprehensive approach is superior to other approaches, without analyzing the extent of corroboration or the superiority of this approach. A credible argument could be made that too many agents in a complex operation further complicate the operation. At the very least, the tension between the comprehensive approach and the desire to achieve unity of effort should be acknowledged and understood.

## **Awkward Epiphanies**

There is a variety of lessons that can be called awkward epiphanies—the lessons, which

though they may have become clear, no one wants to learn. As discussed above, the importance and desirability of unity of command or unity of effort is well-established. A lesson the U.S. should have learned in recent years is that there is a potentially inverse relationship between the democratic accountability of its allied governments and their ability to support U.S. efforts without the consent of their constituents.

**A lesson the U.S. should have learned in recent years is that there is a potentially inverse relationship between the democratic accountability of its allied governments and their ability to support U.S. efforts without the consent of their constituents.**

The Turkish government could not support U.S. efforts in Iraq over the heads of Turkish legislators or beyond what the Turkish parliament would permit. As a result, the U.S. was denied what was considered an extremely important launching platform for OIF in 2003. In 2004, the pro-American government of Jose Aznar in Spain was decisively defeated by the Socialist opposition that had pledged to defect from the U.S.-sponsored coalition of the willing in Iraq. His defeat was followed by the rapid withdrawal of Spanish troops. The lesson here is that the democratic accountability advocated by the U.S. for all governments forces those governments to put their constituents’ interests ahead of any U.S. interest. That principle implies an inherent degree of instability in coalitions of democratic states.

One might even go as far as to say that the real lesson learned—though not liked by

many—is that even when unity of command is achieved in a coalition, unity of effort is a bridge too far. In Afghanistan, the coalition achieved unity of command when the various command authorities in-country were fused in the person of General Stanley McChrystal. However, even in the achievement of unity of command, the multiple national caveats limit unity of effort. Yet this is likely close to a best case scenario where the fusion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and U.S. military missions resulted in the most unified command possible among coalition partners.

**...knowing the right thing to do does not mean the U.S. can do it—regardless of any lessons learned.**

Even in this environment, General James Jones has alluded to national caveats as “NATO’s operational cancer,” and “an impediment to success.”<sup>12</sup> The lesson, awkward as it may be, is unity of command, though desirable, does not guarantee unity of effort or unity of commitment. So long as coalition partners perceive their national interests as binding, unity of effort and commitment remain beyond reach.

Another awkward epiphany is that knowing the right thing to do does not mean the U.S. can do it—regardless of any lessons learned. The U.S. has long known for example the risks associated with holding elections early in a post-conflict environment. Officials knew that early elections in Iraq could be extremely divisive—and indeed they were as a result of the Sunni boycott. Yet deferring national elections in Iraq was not an option due to the relentless pressure for early elections coming from Ayatollah

Sistani and others.

Since the U.S. government under then-president Richard Nixon began the long “war on drugs” in 1971, the U.S. has tried a variety of strategies for reducing narcotic drug use and availability. A major element of the so-called “Plan Colombia,” initiated during the Clinton administration, was and remains a military anti-narcotics offensive relying heavily on aerial eradication of coca plants. This is despite the 1988 publication by the RAND Corporation of “Sealing the Borders: The Effects of Increased Military Participation in Drug Interdiction.”

This extensive study funded by the U.S. Department of Defense found that the use of the U.S. military to interdict drugs en route to the U.S. would be minimal or even negative. This confirmed the findings of seven previous studies and was reaffirmed by a later RAND study on the same topic conducted in 1994. Fast forward to 2010 where the U.S. military is engaged in a robust effort to destroy poppy production in Afghanistan which, since the invasion of 2001, has become by far the world’s greatest opium poppy producer. This appears to be a very awkward epiphany—a lesson the U.S. just does not want to learn no matter what the cost of not learning it.

## **The Syntax of Lessons Learned**

Unlike conventional war where the U.S. has a successful history of military dominance, the record on complex operations, at least in recent decades, is ambiguous. The infamous “Blackhawk down” experience in Somalia in 1993 was traumatic and singed American leaders, casting such a pall on the appetite for complex contingencies that a restrictive national policy was codified as Presidential Decision Directive 25, Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations (PDD-25). This directive established a “vital national interests” test for engagement and required a clear plan for terminating the engagement. There was much

wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, but ultimately no U.S. intervention to stop the Rwanda genocide of 1994 was partially a result of this “vital national interests” threshold.<sup>13</sup>

Later U.S. experiences in complex operations in the Balkans and East Timor were ambivalent, and from the outset the George W. Bush administration was decidedly opposed to involvement in complex operations, with all the main administration leaders on record opposing. Indeed the nullification by that administration of all the relevant presidential directives of the preceding administration reflected this bias.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, changed the disposition of the Bush administration toward complex operations. The invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 thrust the Bush administration into the two most challenging complex operations since Vietnam. And it was only when things in Iraq started to go wrong in 2004 that the lesson learning cycle began again. Yet as discussed above, even years later the civilian agencies still have no effective institutional architecture in place for joined lessons learned.

The institutional deficit is compounded by conceptual handicaps for some of the reasons discussed above. The focus on affirmations, dependence on un-validated assumptions, and reluctance to acknowledge awkward lessons impede the process. An appropriate syntax for articulating lessons or a clear concept of what a complex operations lesson looks like is lacking. The official U.S. military definition of a lesson learned is knowledge that “results from an evaluation or observation of an implemented corrective action that contributed to improved

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\*\*\*Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction; Joint Lessons Learned Program, CJCSI 3150.25D, 10 October 2008. The definition goes on to include: “results from an evaluation or observation of a positive finding that did not necessarily require corrective action other than sustainment.”

performance or increased capability.”\*\*\* This definition would be stronger without the reference to “increased capability” for, as argued above, untested capability cannot validate a lesson.

Adapting the military definition of lessons learned to complex operations, one might say the purpose of lessons is to improve performance in accomplishing foreign policy and national security objectives in complex operations. In this view, increasing one’s wisdom or appreciation of complexity is instrumental—potentially useful but only insofar as it improves performance. Not all knowledge has such a pragmatic and operational purpose; not all knowledge is adaptable to “lessons learned” functionality. In order to frame lessons effectively one needs a syntax based on the following principles: 1) lessons learned for complex operations should be refutable; 2)

### **Lessons learned from complex operations should be firmly grounded in the logic of scientific discovery.**

lessons learned should be actionable; and 3) lessons learned should include an irreducible element of inter-disciplinary or inter-agency content.

Lessons learned from complex operations should be firmly grounded in the logic of scientific discovery. Science moves forward via an iterative process of hypothesis and experiential corroboration or refutation. As long as the hypothesis is corroborated by experiment, it retains the assumption of validity, but as soon as it is refuted in experiment or experience, that assumption is nullified. It is this iterative process that permits both incremental building

of the scientific knowledge base, as well as paradigm shifts when the existing knowledge base is out of touch with reality.

What is most critical and relevant to the lessons learned process is that a scientific hypothesis must be refutable—it must be subject to being proven false.<sup>14</sup> Likewise a lesson learned must be refutable in theory. A lesson learned that cannot theoretically be refuted can likewise not be corroborated. The injunction to “think outside the box” may be good advice, but as a lesson learned, it fails. That someone

**In order to avoid redundancy with the robust military lessons learned systems, complex operations lessons learned should have distinctive interagency or inter-disciplinary elements that the standard military lessons learned process will not likely capture.**

has “thought outside the box” cannot be corroborated or refuted. This advice lies outside the syntax of a lesson and is meaningless in the lessons learned sense.

To serve the practitioner community in a meaningful way, a lesson should be actionable and reveal specific causal dynamics in complex operations. The practitioner needs to know what impact his/her actions will have on a given situation or system. If the lesson proposed cannot be articulated in such a way that it at least in principle could help to improve outcomes, it has only marginal value at best. The oft repeated observation that civilians and Soldiers have “different cultures” may be accurate, but it prescribes or guides no action.

To be meaningful in a lessons learned

sense, the syntax must be adjusted so the lesson identifies causal dynamics of complex operations. It might be argued for example that the performance of civ-mil teams in complex operations is enhanced if they are given the opportunity to train jointly pre-deployment and break down some of their respective cultural barriers. This is a plausible hypothesis that can be tested, validated, and refuted and if proven valid, can guide future action. U.S. Army instructions specify a lesson learned should result in a prescribed change of behavior: “An observation or insight does NOT become a lesson learned until behavior has changed.”<sup>15</sup> That is what is meant by actionable.

In order to avoid redundancy with the robust military lessons learned systems, complex operations lessons learned should have distinctive interagency or inter-disciplinary elements that the standard military lessons learned process will not likely capture. Among the key challenges of complex operations is to apply the diverse elements of national power optimally so as to achieve the best results for national security. Overcoming interagency frictions, cultural barriers, respective unfamiliarity, and working jointly and effectively should be core elements of complex operations lessons learned.

However one should not interpret the comprehensive or 3D approach to necessarily or exclusively refer to operations involving multiple agencies. In some cases single agencies may be applying multiple elements of national power; the Department of Defense and the armed services frequently are agents for humanitarian assistance and increasingly development assistance. Their application of both defense and development tools in the same operational environment should be examined for lessons learned as well. The perspective of the lesson in any case should be a multi-agency (or non agency-specific) perspective.

## A Systematic Approach

The U.S. cannot afford to rely on processes that are random, coincidental, or episodic to learn lessons in complex operations. A methodical process should be established that can identify prospective areas for examination, effectively articulate proposed lessons in the appropriate syntax, validate lessons by distinguishing true lessons from individual experiences, and disseminate them. The Army has developed a formal learning process and established the Center for Army Lessons Learned to manage the process. The lesson learning cycle begins with observation followed by collection, analysis, validation, dissemination, and archiving.<sup>16</sup> This cycle constitutes a rational and self-conscious method to learn from experience in a systematic fashion and ensure that what is learned becomes institutionalized so that others may benefit from it.

In developing a lesson learning process or system, the civilian agencies should establish an equally rigorous methodology. Typically, raw information should be gleaned through after-actions reviews, post-assignment debriefings and interviews, and a variety of other sources. What is important at this initial stage is instituting these processes to insure that experience is documented. This might also be called “observation.” The point is to require reflection on experience and a self-conscious effort to capture information relating to specific challenges, behaviors, and outcomes. These procedures take time and resources and, above all, an institutional commitment, but if learning is to be systematic, they are necessary.

As raw information is collected, it must be “binned” or sorted to enable analysts to compare against similar categories of information. The processing and analysis steps are critical for recognizing patterns and determining potentially fruitful areas for discovery. Only when patterns have emerged from multiple sources is there a

justifiable expectation of a credible lesson. Just because a claim is made, one cannot assume it represents a valid lesson. The lessons learned process must distinguish between interesting individual experiences and widely applicable lessons. That is not to say individuals cannot or should not learn from their own individual experiences (a perverse notion), but that an individual experience is less likely to indicate significant dynamics of a situation or system than a pattern derived from multiple sources.

**The lessons learned process must distinguish between interesting individual experiences and widely applicable lessons.**

Once a pattern is observed, additional collection and analysis is required to articulate, validate, corroborate, or refute the potential lesson. This is not a simple process. It requires time and precision. Yet, this is the core of the lessons learned process—the core of the scientific approach and of discovery. It is only through such a process that a lesson can be tested. The testing might be through actual field experience or through simulations, but until tested and corroborated, no claim can be made for the validity of the lesson. Even when repeatedly validated, no lesson can make the claim of absolute and permanent verification. In complex operations, at least, but likely in all political-economic situations, many variables are in a state of continuous mutation and thus rendering all knowledge ultimately ephemeral. This is widely recognized even if not always acknowledged within the world of the hard sciences. Nevertheless, without corroboration, a putative lesson is merely speculation.

The final critical element is dissemination.

Lessons not disseminated to those who might benefit from them are lessons lost—and as Santayana said, “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” A proactive system for disseminating validated lessons from experience to those in need of that knowledge and in a position to modify their behavior accordingly is the only way to institutionalize knowledge.

To send personnel, whether civilian or military, into a complex operation without the benefit of the learning that has taken place previously is to send them unprepared. Given complex operations include reconstruction and stabilization operations, security and counterinsurgency operations, transition, and irregular warfare, to be unprepared is to be in grave danger. This is not only morally unacceptable from the standpoint of the Soldier or civilian working to achieve U.S. national objectives in complex operations, it is also a formula for failure in protecting national security.

**IAJ**

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# *Moving Beyond Force-on-Force Planning*

**by James Cricks**

***"The commander should wargame each tentative COA [course of action] against the most probable and the most dangerous adversary COAs (or most difficult objectives in noncombat operations) identified through the JIPOE [Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment] process."***

***—Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operational Planning***

There was a time when the prevailing thought was that the world was flat. That construct seemed logical to most people, even educated ones. It is difficult now to imagine the earth as a disk floating in water with the sky above. There is a similar flaw in current military planning for operations that focus solely on friendly and adversary forces while ignoring other major players. The Blue Team (friendly forces) and Red Team (the adversary) construct, while useful for conventional wars of the past and the Cold War, has not adequately prepared U.S. forces for recent operations.

Various noncombatants and other third party players, including resident civilians; refugees; warring clans; ethnic minorities; religious competitors; employees of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); officials and technicians from international organizations (IOs), such as the UN and World Bank; international businessmen; and even competing gangs of criminals complicate today's battlefields. These disparate groups of players or "neutrals" constitute the majority of people in any war zone and receive scant attention in the American military planning process. A new planning process must be created to better account for these neutrals in the complex environment of modern warfare.

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## High Cost for Civilian Populations

U.S. forces need a new process to protect, assist, and cultivate civilians, particularly if Soldiers are to win their “hearts and minds” in ideologically- or religiously-driven insurgencies. Civilians account for the vast majority of casualties in modern armed conflict. “The safest place on the modern battlefield is to be in uniform,” according to Ambassador Robert Seiple from the U.S. State Department. During the last first years of Operation Enduring

**“The safest place on the modern battlefield is to be in uniform”...**

Freedom to free Afghanistan from Taliban control, 1,268 U.S. and coalition (military/civilian) personnel have been killed; however, over 10,000 Afghan civilians have been killed.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan-Human Rights (UNAMA HR) recorded 2,412 civilian deaths in 2009 alone. That number appears to have been the highest toll of civilian deaths for any year since the fall of the Taliban regime but is not believed to be more than twice the average of the previous seven years.

Similar dangers existed for civilians during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). As of August 2010, there were 4,421 U.S. (military/civilian) personnel killed during OIF. In contrast, the Iraq Family Health Survey conducted under the auspices of the World Health Organization estimated 151,000 civilian deaths were due to violence from March 2003 through June 2006 (the survey holds a 95 percent certainty range). The Brookings Institution estimated 118,631 deaths from May 2003 to April 2009.

Modern warfare also causes upheavals in

civilian populations and generates large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. According to estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 4.7 million Iraqis have been displaced since OIF began, and as of September 2008, some 38 percent of the 1.6 million internally displaced persons had not received any humanitarian assistance during their displacement. Today, Jordan and Syria are struggling with 2 million refugees who are reluctant to return to Iraq.<sup>2</sup> Historically, the world saw an even greater outflow of refugees from what is now Israel into neighboring areas, and from Afghanistan to Pakistan during Soviet operations in the 1980s. As is well known, the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Afghan Taliban began in the camps created by those refugees.

The Kosovo War also demonstrated the lack of attention that planners give to civilian needs on the battlefield. In the build up to war over Serbia’s alleged violation of human rights in Kosovo, allied analysts and planners focused on the Serb military and potential military targets. They never fathomed that the Serbs would forcibly drive hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Muslims toward Albania and Macedonia. The movement of 863,000 Kosovar refugees had a dramatic impact on the fragile governments of those neighboring states and nearly precipitated their collapse. As a result, allied planners had to shift airlift and other resources from logistical combat support to humanitarian operations quickly which led to NATO’s Operation Allied Harbour in 1999.

The lack of adequate advanced planning for Kosovar refugee support led to problems in coordinating U.S. Air Force and Army activities. While the Air Force was reacting to the worsening refugee situation, the U.S. Army was still following the original plan, deploying Task Force Hawk to conduct a ground offensive through the area the refugees were then occupying.<sup>3</sup> Instead of being empty

places, the battlefields were full of civilians caught between two warring sides. If Kosovar refugees had stayed in Albania and Macedonia after the war, they could have had an even greater, negative impact on regional stability by creating significant refugee communities.

At the end of 2009, there was an estimated 43.3 million people forcibly displaced worldwide. That number is rising because fewer refugees are returning to their home countries. UNHCR's António Guterres has noted that, "Major conflicts such as those in Afghanistan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo show no signs of being resolved. Conflicts that had appeared to be ending or were on the way to being resolved, such as in southern Sudan or in Iraq, are stagnating."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to threats to civilian populations and the problems caused by refugees, military planners need to consider other noncombatants in war and stabilization zones. Recent statistical analysis on threats to aid workers worldwide published by the Overseas Development Institute reveals that attacks on humanitarian personnel, facilities, and assets have increased significantly in recent years. Host nation nationals, in particular local contractors of UN agencies and NGO staff, continue to be the most vulnerable, though there has also been a sharp increase in attacks on international staff in the past three years. In Iraq, the lack of acceptance of and threats to UN and NGO personnel by militia groups has resulted in heavy reliance on the remote management of humanitarian programs. Whether issues involve civilian populations, refugees, NGOs, or aid workers, military plans should address the needs of noncombatants on the battlefield and in the aftermath of war, or planners will pay for the long-term consequences.

## Future Scenarios

In addition to planning better for the presence of third party players, the U.S.

government should consider new types of threats forces might face in the future. The U.S. should consider, in particular, possible climate-change scenarios, their potential impacts on various populations, what role the military might be called upon to play, what scale of military and interagency resources might be required, and how roles might change through time.

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For example, to enhance training, military planners might develop a scenario that deals with the consequences of a severe drought in a place like Darfur or the Sahel. In this drought scenario:

- Populations would move from more arid to less arid areas, resulting in fierce competition for scarce water between the migrants and resident farmers and ranchers.
- Severe wind storms would damage crops.
- People would largely have to fend for themselves or rely on aid provided by international organizations.
- Rival gangs would prey on all parties and disrupt the distribution of humanitarian aid.
- Food riots would occur.
- Religious leaders with links to terrorist organizations would become more prominent and use strong anti-Western themes in their information campaigns.
- Unemployment would climb to an all-time high, with an expanding population losing hope.

- In addition to an ongoing AIDS epidemic, a cholera outbreak would occur and be exacerbated by poor personal hygiene and inadequate sanitation, refuse, sewage, and drainage systems.

Parts of Africa, in fact, have been dealing with these problems for decades and their situations could deteriorate further. Education at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College describes the current environment but does not fully prepare field-grade officers for dealing with these future planning problems.

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### **Where we are today**

Over the last decade, national strategic planners and the military have increasingly recognized the need to address the needs of civilians in wartime and its aftermath, as well as to look at what new challenges they may face in the years and decades ahead. Changing methods, procedures, and operational principles—what the military calls doctrine—is difficult to accomplish in any organization and particularly difficult in one of over 1.4 million men and women, but the process has begun. As implied by the focus of this journal, planners are addressing federal interagency coordination as one step in changing doctrine. It is assumed that civilian departments working closely with the Department of Defense (DoD) will be better able both to define and address threats to national security than if DoD operates as a

separate entity as it has in the past.

DoD Directive 3000.05 “Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations” outlines how DoD fulfills its role as defined under National Security Presidential Directive 44, Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization. It notes that integrated civilian and military efforts are key to successful stability operations and charges the department to work closely with other U.S. government departments and agencies, foreign governments, global and regional international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector.

Counterinsurgency manuals (Army Field Manual 3-24 and Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5) stress that “civil considerations are often the most important factors” in planning military operations. They also note the requirement to focus on groups beyond the host nation and the adversary. Wayne Michael Hall, an American intelligence theorist, has outlined a holistic plan to think in complex environments by incorporating impressive techniques to create a more sophisticated mission analysis.<sup>5</sup> Major General Michael Flynn, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence in Afghanistan, acknowledged the problem that the U.S. has focused the overwhelming majority of collection efforts and analytical brainpower on insurgent groups and was unable to answer fundamental questions about other aspects of the operational environment.<sup>6</sup>

The operational planners at geographic combatant commands (GCC), such as the U.S. European Command, Pacific Command, and Central Command, have habitual relationships with a few interagency representatives. The State Department and intelligence agencies are usually represented by permanent personnel at each GCC. U.S. European Command, for example, has an integration planning cell that adds representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Justice, and

the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).<sup>7</sup> These interagency representatives vary widely in their expertise, on-going operations, and established relationships with the GCC. One of the most important roles of these representatives is to reach into their respective organizations to find subject matter experts.

The GCC may also have a “J9 staff group” or Interagency Directorate that engages and collaborates with international governmental and non-governmental organizations, academia, the private sector, think tanks, and other organizations.

Within the broader interagency community, the U.S. has Policy Coordination Committees (PCCs) at the strategic level within the NSC. The various interagency PCCs may include officers from the Departments of State, Treasury, Commerce, Labor, Defense, and others to coordinate the formulation and clarification of policy on particular issues. In addition to PCC working groups, the NSC established two special interagency groups to better coordinate the activities of the large commitments of U.S. military, reconstruction, and diplomatic contingents in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>8</sup> For DoD, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has the mission to integrate interagency and multinational partners into planning efforts as appropriate.

The State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), utilizing its ties with UNHCR and others, has also assisted defense planners, to some degree. Much of the bureau’s nearly \$2 billion in humanitarian assistance programs involve conflicts and their aftermaths. These PRM programs directly support U.S. policy to stabilize and rebuild countries emerging from conflict and reduce the potential for renewed conflict, instability, and support for terrorism. Were PRM to broaden its efforts with the DoD to be more actively involved with operational

planners, it could become a key asset in expanding the needed interagency planning process.

## Current Doctrine

Given there is a general awareness at DoD and among all interagency partners for better coordination in pursuing national security interests on the battlefield and in other challenging arenas, actual progress has been slow. For example, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is responsible for developing the National Military Strategy, joint doctrine, policies, and procedures. Given the ancillary emphasis on interagency coordination, one might expect a good deal of interagency consultation by the chairman and his staff in producing such documents. Nonetheless, these documents are almost entirely developed within the military community. Weaknesses in interagency input and consultation are partially blamed on legislatively mandated timelines

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that larger interagency participation would make difficult to meet. In rare cases, DoD has made exceptional efforts to vet these documents with a range of potential critics and other

interested parties. The writing and publication of FM 3-24/MCW 3-33.5 is an example of extensive coordination that has been highly-regarded across the government and academic communities.

Another area in which interagency coordination has progressed more slowly than desired has been the development of greater capacity in the civilian agencies to competently identify and express the needs, points of view, and challenges that might be presented by various noncombatants in war zones or chaotic humanitarian situations. To date, it is unclear if the State Department or USAID can or wish to fill this role. Some of their officers indicate they consider this mission to be beyond their organizations' charters and the

and tribal leaders. Who could possibly be (or become) better equipped within the interagency community to provide such information than the Department of State and its affiliate USAID? Without such information a military command is less likely to develop objectives, operations, and an end state in which peace and stability are assured. Joint Publication 5-0 directs geographic combatant commanders to work closely with civilian leadership to establish a clearly defined military end state, but for that process to be effective, the civilian side of the equation must evolve more than it has to date.

In partial response to this requirement and to bridge the gap until the civilian agencies could expand their capacities, legislation has required the military to set up joint interagency coordination groups (JIACGs). Each geographic combatant command has set up differently structured JIACGs, some with retired civil servants and Foreign Service officers and others with military officers who have experience working in other federal agencies. However they are structured, the objective of all the JIACGs has been to establish regular, timely, and collaborative working relationships between civilian and military operational planners at the GCC level. Joint Forces Command and U.S. European Command were drivers in these efforts to gain greater interagency participation. Unfortunately, JIACGs appear to have fallen out of favor while commanders continue to experiment with other organizations. No well-accepted organization has appeared.

## **Other Considerations**

Gaining greater civilian interagency input on noncombatant or neutral issues is more than just an effort to gain additional technical capabilities. Human rights and other issues are appreciated differently in military and civilian circles. It is too simplistic to assert military planners will carry out civilian priorities, especially if civilians are not actively

**...to bridge the gap until the civilian agencies could expand their capacities, legislation has required the military to set up joint interagency coordination groups...**

capabilities of their representatives at military commands. Nonetheless, the role needs to be filled, and those agencies appear to be the most appropriate candidates. Accordingly, just as the military must make changes, so too should these agencies.

Successful stabilization efforts that enable effective civilian government following conflict demand a better understanding of the concerns and perspectives of such groups as the specialized UN agencies, the Organization of African Unity, and other regional organizations and NGOs, as well as pillars of social power in the affected nations, including religious groups

involved at the planning level. Human rights opportunities, such as opening political prisons or developing gender protections, may be ignored in the operational calculus because they are not considered to be significant objectives by active duty military officers.

In 2004, the Triangle Institute for Security Studies Project on the Gap between the Military and American Society studied attitudes and found sharp differences when military connections were considered.<sup>8</sup> More than 35 percent of civilian nonveterans rated “promotion of human rights” to be a “very important” goal whereas less than 14 percent of active duty military officers shared this view. The use of force and initiation of a militarized dispute are other key aspects of courses of action which can be shaped differently by the addition of civilian viewpoints. Allowing active duty military planners to determine earlier phases of a plan does not make sense just because the military may have the largest role.

Getting non-military advice from a reasonably large pool of problem solvers will usually create better planning groups. Scott Page, a complex systems professor at the University of Michigan, discusses the power of this diversity dynamic for solving complex problems in his book *The Difference*. Page asserts that diversity is more important than homogenous ability because problem solvers improve iteratively upon previous work and take the process forward into new areas that were previously unexplored. Implicitly, Page is criticizing what is often called “stove piping” or the production of plans within a homogeneous or limited group, without much consultation or input from other, often affected groups or agencies. As previously discussed, stove piping has been a hallmark of military planning and of other agencies.

Many times the military has a short-term role when a crisis devolves into violence that in later years is followed by civilian-led implementation

and compromise. Rationally, military and civilian leaders should not pursue stove-piped approaches but rather coordinate activities from the beginning, agree on objectives, and forge a strategy in which military actions improve rather than worsen the chances that the civilians

**Creating stable jobs and self-sufficient economies should also be important strategic success criteria, if the government’s aim is to work better with noncombatants and neutrals.**

will be able to achieve a stable, long-term peace. The Dayton Accords in Bosnia are examples in which NATO played a prominent but stove-piped role in the 1990s, and now civilian organizations, such as the European Union, are leading efforts to create a stable social structure. In the interest of security and perceived time constraints, military headquarters did not often consult with the European Union and other groups. The artistry of operations planning is finding an imaginative way to incorporate interagency, intergovernmental, international, NGO, and other insights without stalling the process.

Creating stable jobs and self-sufficient economies should also be important strategic success criteria, if the government’s aim is to work better with noncombatants and neutrals. As Carl Schramm ably commented in the May/June 2010 issue of *Foreign Affairs*: “The United States’ experience with rebuilding economies in the aftermath of conflicts and natural disasters has evidenced serious shortcomings.” Schramm recommends the U.S. military increase its competence in economics. Surely the interagency process should better address

economics in the aftermath of warfare, but one can question or disagree with the premise that the military should take on that responsibility. The proposal is reminiscent of the Secretary Rumsfeld-era project of independent intelligence analysis within the Pentagon and the pitfalls of disregarding expert opinions from outside DoD. Leadership in assisting economic development would seem better placed with the U.S. Treasury, USAID, or the Economic Bureau of the State Department.

## **Other Ideas**

Considering multi-sided problems should place a priority on sharing ideas, sometimes in intellectually-uncomfortable international settings. These interactions should be both written and verbal. The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College strategic communication program provides a good model. Students are required to interact on a blog site and write an article. An uneducated Internet search during planning is a poor substitute for focused research and lacks the depth of knowledge necessary to plan a multi-year campaign. There are other methods beyond changing doctrine to increase opportunities:

- Partnerships. Linking officers with non-military personnel early in their careers establishes contacts and develops different perspectives. Ideas arise as much out of casual conversations as they do out of formal meetings. Innovation comes from the interactions of people at a comfortable distance from one another, neither too close nor too far.
- Annual conferences. Periodic meetings on important topics, possibly in a technology, entertainment, design (TED)-type setting bring together thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give presentations concerning significant issues. These presentations are later distributed without charge on the Internet and translated into fifty languages.

## **Conclusion**

Current planning was well designed to face a Cold War adversary, but it has not evolved to deal with complex situations. Doctrine including Joint Publication 5-0 must be changed to ensure neutrals are better considered during course of action development and wargaming. This change will involve knowledge gathering from a wider variety of sources and developing imaginative ways to break down communication barriers (including classification of documents) that have inhibited participation. Military leaders must see the benefits in sharing information at an early stage and creating deeper interagency solutions. Non-military education must be a component in this process beginning with focused interaction at the company-grade level.

Some analysts have already considered the implications of neutral activities and changed their focus in Afghanistan. Their efforts may improve one theater, but joint intelligence preparation of the operational environment, operational design, and the joint operation planning process must be redefined across the military. To continue with a default look at two sides does not recognize the current reality. **IAJ**

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# Kansas National Guard

## *Agribusiness Development*

# in Afghanistan

**by Eric Peck and Lynndee Kemmet**

National Guard Agribusiness Development Teams are playing a critical role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) is based on programs developed by the National Guard in its state partnership programs and a program to bring development to Latin America while providing training opportunities for National Guard units. The concept was created nearly 20 years ago to form partnerships with developing nations and to foster ongoing relationships to assist in post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction. National Guard teams now operate through various Department of Defense programs or operations in many nations around the world.

The concept has since been transported to Afghanistan, where teams from states in the U.S. with significant agribusiness capacity are operating on the ground. The ADTs consist of National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who have backgrounds and expertise in various sectors of the agribusiness field. ADT members also bring personal ties and relationships that allow them to leverage the assets and expertise of land grant universities and cooperative extension services within their home states.

Because ADT members are also combat trained, they are able to operate in areas where the risks exceed acceptable standards for civilian staff from such agencies as the U.S. Departments of State and Agriculture (USDA) or non-indigenous staff members from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a complete unit, the ADT has the capacity to provide security, hold an area, and assist local governments or community leaders in improving the economic conditions of the local population, which makes the ADT one of the best models for economic development assistance in

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the least-developed, most insecure regions.

By its very nature, the ADT is a collaborative mission. Although the ADT takes the lead in agricultural reconstruction efforts, it works closely with other military units and civilian agencies. The initial goal of the ADT is to transfer the reconstruction mission to civilians with domestic and international government agencies and civilian aid organizations. The ultimate goal is to transfer the mission to local, regional, or national governments.

Building this collaborative effort, however, is not without its challenges. These challenges include improving information-sharing among the many military, government, and civilian entities operating on the ground and coordinating development efforts among these many different entities engaged in reconstruction and economic development. Along with this, ADTs often face the challenge of building collaboration among local population groups that are often in conflict with one another.

This article reviews the efforts and lessons learned from the ADT program by examining the initial Kansas National Guard ADT deployment to Afghanistan.

### **Collaboration is the First Step to Success—Kansas ADT 1**

In May 2009, Kansas Adjutant General Major General Tod Bunting assigned Colonel Eric Peck to build the team that would deploy to Afghanistan. Success required constructing an entire collaborative network that would extend back into the U.S.

Peck possessed military and civilian skills, a background in both business and agriculture, and post-conflict and post-disaster response and reconstruction experience. Peck's relationship with subject matter experts (SMEs) at Kansas State University (KSU), gained through his father's lifetime of service to the KSU Cooperative Extension Service, proved critical to the ADT's success. KSU faculty and staff

provided agricultural training for ADT team members and consulted with ADT members in Afghanistan via the Internet, phone calls, and video teleconferences.

Creating the ADT required collaboration among military branches. National Guard ADTs draw from both Army and Air National Guard units. Team members can also come from outside hosting states. States allow a National Guard member in a state that does not have an ADT to transfer to the National Guard of a state with an ADT. Finding a method that would

**The Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) is based on programs developed by the National Guard in its state partnership programs and a program to bring development to Latin America while providing training opportunities for National Guard units.**

allow non-military SMEs to join the team is still a challenge in constructing ADTs. The Kansas ADT sought to take agricultural experts from KSU to Afghanistan but was not successful in doing so.

Once assigned to its deployment region, the first Kansas ADT made contact with the military-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) already on the ground in Laghman Province. Kansas ADT members established close working relationships with specific PRT team members, particularly the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) representative Jodi Rosenstein and the USDA representative Jim Green. Rosenstein and Green provided insight as the members conducted the team-building and training processes.

## **Team Building as Part of Pre-Deployment Training**

A key factor in the success of ADTs is building a unit that deploys as a cohesive team. The Kansas ADT had only eight months from formation to deployment. While eight months may seem like a long time, one must consider that a National Guard unit trains only two days per month. In the case of the first Kansas ADT, training consisted of approximately four weeks of pre-mobilization training in Kansas just prior to mobilization, which included annual training days and additional allocated training days. With the assignment of personnel to the newly created ADT beginning in October 2009, the team's leadership developed a plan to carefully build the team while accomplishing all individual training tasks and 75 percent of the collective tasks.

To enhance team building, the ADT conducted a guided military decision making process during the first drill weekend. This exercise was designed to get team members

and excellent learning experience for all 58 team members.

Members continued the team-building process by proposing a mission partnership with KSU for obtaining ongoing agricultural expertise from the university's faculty and staff and for training ADT agricultural experts. After the ADT presented the mission, KSU agreed to support the training and "reachback" support for agribusiness expertise. During the training, KSU faculty explained general agricultural subjects and conducted several one-on-one sessions that helped to build relationships and solidify mission participation.

Throughout the deployment, the ADT and KSU faculty exchanged information via emails, phone calls, and video teleconferences. KSU faculty members widely shared "Good News Stories," a series of briefing slides with captioned pictures showing projects and week-by-week progress, to highlight the concrete results of the forward mission they were supporting.

## **The Benefits of Pre-Established Relationships in Team Building**

Collaboration among military and civilian entities on the ground in Afghanistan is critical for the success of reconstruction and economic development efforts. But this collaborative effort must first exist within an ADT itself. The training of military units traditionally emphasizes a team approach both within a unit and in the relationship of that unit to other units. This same focus was part of the ADT training mission, and it was aided by the fact that National Guard members operate mostly within their states and over time develop contacts with many other members of their state's National Guard.

Because of this, most of the members of the Kansas ADT had either worked directly with or knew of the other team members from previous training, administrative, or mission interaction.

**Collaboration among military and civilian entities on the ground in Afghanistan is critical for the success of reconstruction and economic development efforts.**

working together in smaller groups and introducing them to the non-standard mission of an ADT. It was an interesting process that showcased the broad spectrum of experience from privates just out of advanced individual training in the security force platoon to majors and lieutenant colonels with extensive staff experience from the agricultural SME section. The exercise proved to be a fun, demanding,

This was another important factor in the capability to build a strong, cohesive team for this unique mission. Many of the team members had served together in previous deployments to Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, or Afghanistan, but none had experience with an agricultural development mission. However, many members of the team had performed domestic response missions in support of response and recovery operations for hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, or winter storms, and this experience proved valuable in the ADT's reconstruction mission.

### **Security Self-Sufficiency is Critical for ADT Success in Unstable Regions**

During deployment, ADTs operate within a geographic area that is under the control of a more traditional combat unit known as the "battle space owner." In addition, the military-led PRTs also operate within the same geographic area and have their own reconstruction missions. The ADT coordinates its actions with the battle space owner and the PRT, but each of these entities is engaged in pursuing its own mission and often cannot provide support to the ADT mission. For that reason, the capability of the ADT to provide its own security was a significant factor in mission success.

Despite this need for some level of self-sufficiency, the ADT did coordinate its actions and conduct missions to support the goals and objectives of partners, such as the Afghan government, International Security Forces, the PRT, and the USAID. However, the ADT's focus on the agribusiness sector and the Afghan government support of the agribusiness sector drove the ADT to limit its activities to agricultural training, agricultural infrastructure improvement, or meetings with locals on specific agricultural issues. Other partners with which the ADT interacted had their own focus areas that in some cases were not compatible with the ADT mission sets. Attempting to balance all the competing missions would have been difficult

had the ADT not had its own security personnel and equipment, such as vehicles, radios, and weapons systems. The ability to have this security personnel and equipment is at the heart of what makes the ADT a potential model for reconstruction and economic development in regions that are in great need of assistance but too insecure for traditional aid entities.

The ADT focused on the following general agribusiness areas:

- Education—lifelong agribusiness education
- Production—agronomy and livestock
- Storage—preventing loss after harvest
- Processing—food safety concerns
- Marketing—local first then progressing to more distant markets

Establishing education as a basis for improvements in all other areas is a critical focus and can be approached in a number of ways. The Kansas ADT chose to start with

**...the capability of the ADT to provide its own security was a significant factor in mission success.**

college-educated citizens and used them to work with the secondary education system and then the primary education system through 4-H-like programs. In addition, the ADTs used an intern program to reach farmers at the production level through an extension program very similar to extension programs in the United States. ADTs conducted much of this training at the primary provincial demonstration farm or on farmer-owned demonstration plots. ADT personnel provided input (seeds, fertilizer, etc.), and the farmer provided labor using new ADT-taught

techniques. ADTs conducted this training using several crops including saffron, wheat, corn, and grapes and fruit orchards.

## **Host Nation Collaboration**

Because it is a military unit, the ADT risks appearing to be an invasive military force when providing reconstruction and development assistance in other nations. Such a stigma has the potential of inhibiting the success of an ADT in building collaboration with the local civilian population and the host government. Such collaboration is vital for the ADT to transfer the reconstruction and development effort to civilian control.

From the start of the first Kansas ADT mission, the team ensured that Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers participated in missions. This collaborative participation included planning, rehearsing, pre-combat checks, pre-combat inspections, mission performance, and

relationship-building strategy, both sides did more than just perform the mission together. ADT members and ANA leaders shared meals and collaborated in establishing a school where ADT members taught English, reading, and writing skills, and ANA counterparts tutored ADT members in Pashto. The ADT also collaborated with Afghan local, district, and provincial officials on ADT missions, which progressed to more integrated planning and project execution by Afghan government officials.

The final step of turning all planning and execution over to Afghans is yet to be realized; however, the process to achieve this capacity is in place and, over time, will be implemented. One of the critical programs in this area was the intern program established by the ADT in conjunction with Nangarhar University and the Director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (DAIL) for the province. The basic premise was to provide hands-on training for university students involving several sessions over a couple of months, hire some of these students as extension agent interns, and then use these interns to teach various subjects and hands-on techniques to local farmers. The interns worked for both the DAIL and the ADT, and by the end of the first Kansas ADT mission, the interns, accompanied by the DAIL or his staff, were teaching classes each Sunday in different local communities. These “young professionals” were well received by local farmers.

**The ADT had to depend on its personal relationships with the embedded officers and noncommissioned officers of both the ANA unit and the NATO training team embedded within it to gain full participation.**

after-action reviews. The ADT had to depend on its personal relationships with the embedded officers and noncommissioned officers of both the local ANA unit and the NATO training team embedded within it to gain full participation. Personnel from both the ADT and the ANA gained an appreciation for not only the military mission of protecting agricultural experts, but also of the overall agricultural mission and its contribution to general security. As part of the

## **Lessons Learned in Building Collaboration**

The ADTs in Afghanistan still face many challenges in building collaboration with the many military, government, and civilian entities operating on the ground and engaged in reconstruction and economic development efforts. Most ADTs have at least a half dozen or more different entities working in their areas

of operations. Coordination among all these various military units, foreign and domestic government agencies, and civilian NGOs is challenging and efforts frequently overlap. A joint research project involving researchers from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point's Network Science Center and the Kansas National Guard, with involvement by university researchers and other National Guard ADT units, is working to address these challenges and find solutions.

ADTs have been operating in Afghanistan for several years, and their experiences point to some lessons in building collaboration to help achieve mission success. Gathering information on the lessons learned is part of the joint West Point–Kansas National Guard research project. Succeeding Kansas ADTs have successfully built on the following lessons learned by the first Kansas ADT.

***Build relationships with other units and organizations in the area of operation***

The first Kansas ADT managed to develop a strong relationship with the PRT and USAID staff operating in its area of operations. This relationship led the PRT and USAID to assist it in collaborating with personnel from USDA, which in turn, provided the ADT with access to USDA subject matter experts. Although the ADT could reach back to agriculture experts through its links with KSU, the relationship with USDA provided access to experts on the ground with the ADT. Other relationship-building lessons include the following:

- Collaboration that leads to strong relationships, continuity, and synchronization of effort is key to achieving mission goals.
- Building relationships requires routine and persistent interaction.
- In particular, building relationships with the Afghan people and with Afghan government officials at the national, provincial, and

district level is best accomplished through daily interaction.

- Some method of project management is vital when working in an interagency/intergovernmental/NGO mission area.
- The ADT itself must maintain team integrity, meaning all team members must contribute and often in more than one skill set.
- Development actions, public affairs (both local and at home) and relationships are exponentially more critical than military actions.

**Development actions, public affairs (both local and at home) and relationships are exponentially more critical than military actions.**

***Put a focus on Afghan participation***

As a military unit operating in a foreign nation, ADTs face a greater challenge in winning over local support for mission success than does an NGO or even a foreign civilian government entity. Making ADT missions a collaborative effort with Afghan counterparts is critical for mission success. The ingredients for this success include:

- Determining which local Afghan leaders are the right leaders with whom to collaborate.
- Engaging local government and assisting in the development of local governance, which is an important component of reconstruction and development.
- Encouraging participation from the host country's future generation of young professionals and helping to empower them

in playing a leading role.

- Mentoring and involving local veterinary graduates to build an important local resource for agriculture development.

### ***Develop a strategic communications plan***

It is vital that ADTs communicate and share information with numerous other entities. Despite its importance, this can be very challenging because as military units, ADTs often store and share information on secure military networks that are not available to host country units or to civilian government and aid agencies. ADTs and the West Point–Kansas National Guard research project are addressing these information-sharing challenges.

## **Conclusion**

A key lesson learned from many years of interaction with local communities during natural disaster response and recovery operations is that all successful operations start with a local focus that has community members and community leaders making decisions in prioritizing tasks, actions, and results. It is important to assist through advice, ask the right questions at the right time, and provide resources that either are not readily available or have been lost through the disaster. It is critical that the community determine where it is going, how it is going to get there, and how it will provide its share of the required resources. This process applies in all areas—security, governance, economics, and infrastructure. The ability of all partners (coalition, U.S. government, NGOs, and Afghans) to provide this kind of assistance in a coordinated manner will, over time, provide the outcome all desire—a nation that is self-sufficient, educated, and capable of providing a promising future for its citizens. The ability of all the entities involved in the operation to work together within the resource constraints of time and funding toward accomplishing the goal of self-sufficiency will determine how effective the operation will be. **IAJ**

# Civil-Military *Balance* in Conflict Operations

by Kurt E. Müller

Interventions in the affairs of one state by another may be benign, belligerent, political or military. In addition, these interventions may supplement host-nation authority in delivering assistance. Regardless of character and purpose, there is a long-standing preference for employing civilian agencies rather than military forces to interact with the local populace. But realizing this preference requires developing a workforce familiar with multiple agencies and capable of short-notice deployment, altering the traditional culture of various agencies, and facilitating transitions among numerous multilateral partners inside and outside government.

## Belligerent and Benign Occupation as Background

The need for attention to the civil sector in engaging another society in warfare has a checkered record among heads of government and theoreticians of international relations. Carl von Clausewitz addresses occupation in his posthumous volume, *Vom Kriege*, as a phase of warfare necessary until such time as the outcome of a conflict is recognized by treaty. This activity accounts for a conceptual genesis of civil-military operations and a starting point for discussing the challenges of coordinating civil and military power in civil-military interventions—a term that covers the broad range of activities from war to peacekeeping, peace building, and post-conflict reconstruction.

Military history provides numerous examples of civil-military interventions, both good and bad. Harry Coles and Albert Weinberg note that Belisarius, commanding troops for the Roman emperor Justinian, established a military government in North Africa some 1200 years prior to World War II.<sup>1</sup> In America's military history, Winfield Scott's civil-military intervention in Mexico stands among the good and Lincoln's appointment of civilian-military governors stands among the bad. Practitioners of civil affairs are fond of citing a memo from Eisenhower to Marshall in which Ike laments the time he had to spend on political, civil-sector issues. Such citations often provide a

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civil affairs staff section the rationale for dealing with issues that distract a commander from his tactical or operational mission of defeating an enemy. However, treating political civil-sector issues as distractions runs the risk of isolating a commander from the political purpose he is supposed to achieve.

Interventions need not be adversarial, typically characterized as a military campaign followed by a *belligerent* occupation, as

**...treating political civil-sector issues as distractions runs the risk of isolating a commander from the political purpose he is supposed to achieve.**

Clausewitz had in mind. *Benign* occupations occur when the intervening power has no intention of subduing the indigenous political power. A benign occupation may result from liberating a friendly state from the control of a mutual enemy or from any of several circumstances in which there is an absence of local authority. During World War II, the allies distinguished the occupation on the basis of belligerent status. In friendly territory, allied forces conducted civil affairs (CA), usually based on agreements with governments-in-exile; in enemy territory, allied forces established a military government (MG).

Regardless of the nature of occupation, there are similarities in the functions that must address civil society, from engineering to public health. Even benign occupations risk alienating the local populace, its government, or both.<sup>2</sup> The following example from WWII typifies the dilemma of a benign intervening power. Both official procurement of goods and services and troops' personal expenditures in liberated

and occupied countries required the use of an acceptable currency. Because President Roosevelt was not favorably disposed to recognizing the French Committee for National Liberation (FCNL) as the legitimate government of France, this was more complicated for France than for other nations. The allied command proposed issuing supplemental francs as the preferred medium of exchange. This proposal did not sit well with the FCNL, which proposed issuing its own currency, an option unacceptable to Britain and the U.S. Since other allied alternatives, such as British Military Administration notes, U.S. "yellow-seal" dollars,<sup>3</sup> or Allied Military Francs, would have indicated an occupation, the FNCL acquiesced in accepting the supplemental franc.<sup>3</sup>

Because the provision of services is, in essence, a substitute form of governance, the determination of personnel and means for providing these services require the attention of both political and military leaders. The War Department foresaw the need for such a capacity as a result of past experiences. Post-World War I occupation duty in Germany led Colonel Irwin Hunt to write an after-action review lamenting the lack of preparedness for these tasks, and his report surfaced among war planners in the 1940s. Moreover, British operations in the Middle East led to a cable a year before Pearl Harbor from General Sir Archibald Wavell to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in which he sought "an experienced administrator" to address occupation duties in the Middle East.<sup>4</sup>

Britain's experience in World War II led it to establish a politico-military curriculum at Cambridge University, as well as coursework at the Civil Affairs Staff Centre at Wimbledon.

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\* Coles and Weinberg, pp. 687–992. The "yellow-seal" dollar was U.S. currency printed with a yellow seal where today's Federal Reserve Notes have a green seal.

Two American staff officers attended, and their reports were useful later in establishing the School of Military Government at the University of Virginia, which would be followed by Civil Affairs Training Schools (CATS) at ten universities across the U.S.

Plans for the School of Military Government and the projected use of its graduates quickly became contentious. Some critics saw these plans as portending the development of proconsuls. Perceptions of colonialism and protectorates were articulated to oppose the use of military personnel for civil administration. When news of these plans reached the White House, President Roosevelt sent a memo to Secretary of War Henry Stimson commenting, “[t]he governing of occupied territories may be of many kinds but in most instances it is a civilian task and requires absolutely first-class men and not second-string men.”

Opposition to military conduct of civil administration continued until experience in North Africa demonstrated the necessity for military commands to oversee the civil sector until security was firmly established. By the time the Italian campaign was underway, military attention to the civil sector was a recognized necessity. With an emphasis on feeding a populace whose agricultural production had been profoundly disrupted, CA-MG activities in the Italian campaign relied heavily on military transport. Within the military, CA-MG officers without transportation of their own had to procure vehicles through staff sections of divisional and higher headquarters. Reliance on military logistical commands for shipping, port operations, and ground transport precluded civilianization even when both the military and civilian agencies desired it.

## Civilian Supervision

In accord with the demeanor of President Roosevelt’s rebuke to Stimson regarding a strong preference for civilian conduct of

civil administration, Robert Murphy of the State Department became Eisenhower’s “civil adviser” and had a staff that included representatives of the Department of Agriculture, the War Shipping Administration, Lend-Lease, the Treasury Department, and the Board of Economic Warfare.<sup>5</sup>

A historian of British CA provides a fairly concise overview of the British organization of civilian overseers. General Wavell’s December 1940 cable led not only to establishing the directorate for CA, M.O. 11 in Britain’s War Office,<sup>6</sup> but also a standing interdepartmental committee on Administration of Occupied Enemy Territory (AOET). The AOET evolved through the development of numerous cross-government agencies that it oversaw and to which it reported.<sup>7</sup>

The interagency nature of these constructs is not surprising; however, the military was primarily responsible for implementing the policies these committees established and executing coordinated efforts in the field. Policy realization relied on choosing personnel for the task, but the acquisition process was subject to

**As in today's circumstances, civilian tasks were not high on the agenda of most career military officers.**

military priorities. As in today’s circumstances, civilian tasks were not high on the agenda of most career military officers. British commanders would send officers to CA duty when they did not feel comfortable entrusting them with significant command responsibilities. A similar priority occurred in the U.S.

In the racially divided U.S. military of the 1940s, an unrepresentatively high number of

African-Americans were nominated for CA-MG duty, which would have effectively sidelined them from the military's preferred career tracks. However, even the American military's own review of its proposed CA-MG personnel found few with appropriate backgrounds for the tasks. Consequently, the Army offered commissions in the Staff Specialist Corps and training through CATS to men (and a few women) with appropriate civilian backgrounds. The Civil Affairs and Military Government Branch came along in 1955.

### **The Military in the Civil Sector: Cold War to Desert Storm**

During the Cold War stand-off in Europe between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact forces, the American military focused on its adversary and looked to the civil sector primarily for supplying services in the event of conflict. This focus on the opposing force relegated to the historical record any recognition of the enormous demand for humanitarian assistance (HA) and assigned HA responsibilities to an

Western Europe could not be described as static, it certainly could not be characterized as expeditionary. Since U.S. allies in the presumed area of conflict (West Germany) would not admit of any operational response beyond restoration of the inner-German border, there was no perceived need to address occupation east of that border. Moreover, it would have been impolitic to raise any issues recognizing threats to the continuity of government. The military schools here in the U.S. reflected this orientation: the official line at the CA Officer Advanced Course was that the U.S. Army would not engage in MG after future wars.

The 1991 Iraq war (Desert Storm) pulled the concept of CA back into the limelight. The liberation of Kuwait once again raised topics such as restoration of governing structures in collaboration with a government-in-exile. A Foreign Service officer (FSO) then in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Randall Elliot, contacted the U.S. Ambassador-Designate to Kuwait. This contact led to a request from the government-in-exile to President Bush for assistance in planning post-liberation transitions. In his Army Reserve capacity, Colonel Elliot was the deputy commander of the CA activity supporting U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). The good fortune of having an FSO with appropriate military background overcame the absence of attention to this sector in CENTCOM's staff planning.

A military disinclination to conduct CA-MG remains the norm. Certainly the Rumsfeld planning in 2003 for postwar Iraq disdained any such activity, though as scholars of belligerent occupation often note, failing to provide an occupation capacity does not excuse an intervening power from its responsibility under international humanitarian law of providing for the occupied populace.<sup>8</sup>

In 2003, the deliberate inattention to planning for occupation by the leadership of the

**A military disinclination to conduct [Civil Affairs-Military Government] remains the norm. Certainly the Rumsfeld planning in 2003 for postwar Iraq disdained any such activity...**

Army Reserve structure. Those in CA found it difficult to direct attention to the civil sector other than for host-nation support. Forward-stationed forces had to address their civilian environment, but the concerns were primarily for community relations.

Although the planned theater defense of

Department of Defense (DoD) was scandalous, but it took the insurgency in defeated Iraq to demonstrate the folly of ignoring the need to consolidate military victory with appropriate civil-sector activity. This development can be interpreted as a twist on the World War II experience. In 1942, the War Department feared giving control to civilian agencies; in 2003, the DoD wanted to avoid civil administration but found it could not.

After belatedly addressing occupation issues through an ad hoc Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), DoD rushed to answer criticism by superseding it with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), under a diplomat responding to DoD oversight. As director of ORHA, Lieutenant General Jay Garner had two months prior to the onset of hostilities to prepare occupation plans. He was in Baghdad only one month before being replaced by L. Paul Bremer, as head of the CPA. In 2003, the State Department did not yet focus on reconstruction and stabilization, and coordination between Defense and State was entirely inadequate. Bremer reported to Secretary Rumsfeld but held a presidential appointment and exercised interagency responsibilities without a commensurate interagency panel in Washington.

Avoiding nation building was not only a blind spot for the administration of George W. Bush. After the debacle in Somalia, the Clinton administration wanted to avoid nation building in Bosnia. As Ambassador James Dobbins points out, Iraq in 2003 was “the seventh society that the United States had helped liberate and then tried to rebuild in little more than a decade, the others being Kuwait, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.”<sup>9</sup>

The link between security and diplomacy should need little explanation, as there are numerous examples in both theory and practice. One only needs to look at the frequency with which senior defense officials (including military

personnel) and national security advisors become secretaries of state, ambassadors, and other emissaries. Despite this history, the tendency to isolate military operations and diplomacy from each other perseveres. One of many examples of this persistent tendency is illustrated by Colin Powell’s question to the “Bush-41” leadership team regarding whether the initial defense of Saudi Arabia would lead to an invasion of Kuwait to eject the Iraqis.<sup>10</sup> Clausewitz had written of this propensity by decrying political decision makers’ errors in asking for “purely military” opinions on potential campaigns.<sup>\*\*</sup>

**Complaints of military dominance are not new, but the resolution of this perception requires the development of a deployable pool of civilian experts and resources to support them...**

## **The Civilianization of Interventions**

If the military instrument is a last resort, stability operations will see even more pressure for civilian staffing. This perception is evident in the decade-long talk of the militarization of foreign policy or of development aid that derives from frequent use of the military in these domains. Complaints of military dominance are not new, but the resolution of this perception requires the development of a deployable pool of civilian experts and resources to support

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*\*\* See Clausewitz Book 8: “it is a contradictory affair to summon soldiers for advice with war plans, asking that they judge them purely militarily, as cabinets do....” (Author’s translation, *Vom Kriege*, Verlag des Ministeriums für Nationale Verteidigung, East Berlin, 1957, p. 731.)*

them, so the military is not the only or the default option to conduct reconstruction and stabilization (R&S).<sup>11</sup>

Discussions over the past several years focus on failed and failing states, for which a civilian response of assistance and “capacity building” is often preferable to a military intervention. Although DoD addresses such tasks as part of its perception of “irregular warfare,” the utility of that term may well be confined to the defense sector. In many such circumstances, concerns about regional relations

for transitions to activities that other agencies, NGOs, and host government entities will undertake. Without adequate collaboration—not simply coordination—host government and diplomatic authorities are likely to treat security forces as a security blanket they do not want to release.

Although the rapidity and scalability of a military response offer advantages, many threats to persons and property allow smaller-scale responses, present protracted challenges, or occur in circumstances that call for avoiding a military deployment. Given the history of U.S. military interventions in Latin America, for example, stabilization activities are likely to encounter more favorable responses if the interveners are civilians.

Peacekeeping calls for a permissive environment that often obtains from a military stalemate, and military peacekeeping forces are often a vehicle of choice. But in trying to prevent the escalation of conflict from political contention to violence, an intervention by external military forces is apt to engender hostility from third parties as well as from the state in conflict. In such circumstances, the civilian face—and a multinational one at that—of agencies and NGOs that can develop local resources to meet the demands of the contending factions is preferable.

## **Multilateral Partnerships**

A consensus has been building for about a decade that fragile states must be the concern of the international community. Fragile states threaten established states with various destabilizing forces, from serving as training areas for terrorist groups to threatening to disgorge waves of refugees fleeing conflict. Among the fourteen nations that have been developing civilian responses to address conflict prevention, stabilization, and reconstruction, various contributors to the International Stabilization and Peacebuilding Initiative have

**Given the history of U.S. military interventions in Latin America...stabilization activities are likely to encounter more favorable responses if the interveners are civilians.**

among states may dictate caution about military intervention. If the military possesses the only expeditionary capability with the appropriate skills, the decision may come down to a choice between appearing aggressive despite benign intentions or foregoing an intervention in favor of limited assistance through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

A seldom articulated reason for putting a civilian face on interventions is that a military-led intervention, even a benign one, may demonstrate military priorities, and these goals may skew the activities and ignore significant challenges. An operational-level military staff will usually demonstrate priorities for such issues as preserving combat power. Consequently, it will address redeployment as an inherent aspect of mission completion. But the emphasis on redeployment should not displace the need for collaborative interagency planning

designated specific governmental units, offices, training centers, and academic programs to address this multilateral challenge. Moreover, multilateral organizations such as the African Union, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the United Nations, and the World Bank have been participants in these developments. NATO is also establishing a coordination mechanism for cataloguing the skills and experiences likely to be needed in stability operations.

### **The Civilian Response Corps**

In 2004, the State Department began its civilian efforts with the establishment of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). Congress has given the coordinator the authority and funding to recruit, staff, and deploy government employees from multiple agencies in a Civilian Response Corps (CRC) to help stabilize nations facing or emerging from violent conflict or confronting other significant threats to their stability.

Congress has funded two components of a proposed structure of three (active, standby, and reserve). The CRC has surpassed 130 active-component personnel of a projected force of 264 and 1,000 standby members of an intended bench strength of 2,000.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Members of the CRC are federal employees. Active-component personnel are deployable on short notice; standby members are available typically with 30 days' notice to their home bureaus. These personnel currently come from eight federal agencies: the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Justice, and State and U.S. Agency for

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*\*\*\*The recent review of diplomacy and development, intended to become a quadrennial process, foresees expanding S/CRS into a bureau for conflict and stabilization operations. The new bureau would continue to build the CRC and enhance its interagency collaboration.*

International Development (USAID). A ninth department, Transportation, will soon be added

By comparison with the military services, this deployment capacity is modest indeed. But the U.S. can leverage this capacity, much as its NATO allies rely heavily on mutual assistance to minimize their defense expenditures. As with these military allies, both cost containment and the political value of coalition action dictate the development of interoperable civilian capabilities among partner nations.

**In 2004, the State Department began its civilian efforts with the establishment of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.**

### **Functional Specialties**

The participating agencies offer CRC expertise across a range of domains from agriculture and rural development to public health, rule of law, economic development, and financial policy. Specific domains of expertise may reside in both active and standby components, but depth becomes evident among the standby members. The skills sought for the CRC emerge from an analysis of stability operations that produced an essential task matrix.

Periodic review of R&S operations validates the demand for particular qualifications. Such reviews ensure the CRC is recruiting the skills needed and investing in training these personnel for interagency operations. But frequent reviews also risk undervaluing qualifications that may be needed in future operations. And if the analysis misses qualifications recently in low demand, the U.S. once again faces the

prospect of an ad hoc effort to recruit personnel rapidly and train them in the interagency aspects of their assignments before deploying them, undercutting the rationale for the CRC. Consequently, such reviews should look at the components with assessments tailored to each.

Almost seventy years of military experience is instructive in such an analysis. As the War and Navy Departments were developing plans for occupying Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II, they developed a joint publication, Field Manual (FM) 27-5, *Military Government and Civil Affairs* (22 Dec 1943), that enumerated 24 functional areas. The

**Military planning has long recognized the need to use all elements of national power in responding to significant foreign-policy challenges...But civil servants across federal agencies do not routinely encounter these constructs.**

1958 version of the joint manual (FM 41-5) enumerates 19 specialties; its Army version of 1962 (FM 41-10) tallies 20, a sum that had significant doctrinal longevity. By 2000, FM 41-10 reduced the tally to 16 functional areas, which was further reduced to 14 in a recent reorganization.

The staff recommending these reductions based its actions on the lack of requests for these specialties. But considering the elimination of the arts and monuments specialty in 2000, which would have been useful in mitigating the looting of the Iraqi National Museum in 2003, such decisions must be subject to scrutiny. So long as expenditures for identifying personnel and training them to work in an interagency team

are kept low, the enterprise is cost effective. But lack of use of particular domains or agencies will predictably be cause for review.

### **Familiarizing CRC Members with their Interagency Colleagues**

Military planning has long recognized the need to use all elements of national power in responding to significant foreign-policy challenges. Higher levels of military education emphasize the PMESII (political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and information) elements construct. The special operations community has long emphasized the interaction of diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) elements of national power. But civil servants across federal agencies do not routinely encounter these constructs. Consequently an introduction to whole-of-government planning or comprehensive approaches to include the private sector and NGOs is essential.

All CRC members require initial coursework in whole-of-government approaches to R&S; experience in Washington interagency environment planning at the embassy country-team and regional implementing team levels; and training in operating in austere (sometimes hostile) environments. With the implementation of a qualifying curriculum, personnel with established careers across federal agencies now encounter the whole-of-government and comprehensive approaches that are hallmarks of senior service college curricula in the military.

For experts across the government to fit their specific expertise into a comprehensive R&S plan, they need familiarity with the cultures, priorities, programs, and constraints their counterparts across agencies experience. As with the origin of the CA corps as part of the Army Reserve, the CRC seeks to acculturate individuals with specific expertise into a new environment where they perform within a broad domain and in concert with other specialties.

This task is easier to proclaim than to realize.

The nature of military staffing documents is such that individual billets may be broadly or narrowly defined. The intersection of command responsibility and deployment readiness has not fit well with the concept of stockpiling critical skills for mobilization and deployment. Unlike active component organizations, reserve commanders are accountable for recruiting qualified personnel and filling a high percentage of their billets. If the qualifications are determined loosely so that billets are more easily filled, the commander appears to be doing well. But unit readiness profiles may be at odds with the need to ensure a match of specific skills to a prospective deployment responsibility.

To mitigate this liability, senior commanders seek to foster upward mobility for personnel in a broad domain such as refugee operations, public finance, or cultural affairs that offers opportunities to serve at higher echelons as they are promoted. This solution works for proximate units but is difficult if the echelons are spread across several states. The CA school introduces the specialists to common CA precepts, but it takes little interest in the continuing professional education of the specialists. The CA community at large undertakes this development, but it is exercised hit or miss by the regional CA commands. The recent elimination of specialties at lower echelons undermines connections that permit specialists to progress from tactical to operational levels and exacerbates the senior commanders' ability to manage CA capabilities.

CRC recruiting does not suffer from these constraints. Standby personnel are not assigned to a particular structure that responds to an industrial-age mobilization model. The active component of the corps develops a team structure, and the skill sets defined for these billets are subject to periodic review. Indications are that the most frequently used skills are in general staff planning. But the specialty skills remain in demand and provide a valuable

resource, both when applied directly in the field and when used as a reach-back capability.

Similar sets of domain-specific skills exist across federal agencies, and these apparent overlaps provide necessary links of expertise, while also allowing some choice of agency to use in a given situation. Just as a military response may be undesirable in some

**Just as a military response may be undesirable in some environments, some civilian agencies are more appropriate responders than others for specific missions.**

environments, some civilian agencies are more appropriate responders than others for specific missions. USAID's staff, for example, offers a wide-ranging set of capabilities. But in some instances, a development perspective would be an incomplete response, and in others, the local agencies sent to assist (e.g., security forces) are inappropriate as interlocutors. In such circumstances, the perspectives of multiple agencies with similar expertise offer the solution to the challenge described earlier of one agency's proclivities potentially skewing a planned response from an optimal result.

### **Challenges of Developing a Deployable Civilian Corps**

Developing an expeditionary capacity requires appropriate legal authorities. When a stabilization challenge requires knowledge of agricultural development, for example, the U.S. can certainly find the expertise in an agency or among the agency's clients or consultants. But often these agencies have no authority to deploy personnel to foreign

locations. Even if it receives funds to send its staff abroad, the agency may be constrained to do so. The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), for example, has personnel who work in foreign environments, but Congress funds FAS to promote American products abroad rather than to develop foreign agricultural capacity. The Department of Commerce has programs to facilitate American exports, but the expertise of its personnel can help a foreign economy develop an export capacity as well. With the establishment of the CRC, the executive branch now has congressional approval to borrow such

informs the emerging CRC model. Within USAID, for example, the Disaster Assistance Response Teams of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance have a deployment culture. Domestically, the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the Department of Homeland Security and the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) in the Department of Health and Human Services expect personnel to answer the call of duty when emergencies strike. NDMS relies on medical and veterinary professionals who leave their normal employment to respond to an emergency.

As with the military reserve components, federal legislation protects these personnel from employer reprisals for such duty. NDMS deployments tend to be for short terms: recruiting materials for the Disaster Medical Assistance Teams indicate a two-week norm for a deployment and ask individuals to deploy with “sufficient supplies and equipment to sustain themselves for a period of 72 hours.” The likelihood is that NDMS has less need to litigate reemployment rights of its volunteers than is true for the military reserve components, which now seek to maintain a policy of up to a year’s deployment not more frequently than once every five years.

This operational reserve concept challenges families, employers, and societal structure. If the CRC receives congressional approval to fund a reserve element, which would seek participation of state, county, and municipal employees, such legislative reemployment rights would signal standard practice across emergency-response agencies.

## **Agency Perspectives**

Each agency has not only its own clienteles and funding relationship with Congress, but its own priorities, reporting habits, and cultures. For example, the development, defense, and diplomacy sectors, which all address global concerns, divide the world differently. Each

### **Developing an expeditionary capacity also requires fostering a deployment culture.**

expertise to address the challenges of stabilizing a foreign economy.

Developing an expeditionary capacity also requires fostering a deployment culture. The military has a well-established ethos that bestows professional recognition for participating in foreign operations. The CRC is developing a similar culture. Doing so requires distinguishing between deployments and foreign postings. Although FSOs may spend more than half their careers abroad, the assignments are more akin to expatriate corporate careers than to a military deployment. Until the recent increase in unaccompanied tours, FSOs had few of the difficulties associated with short-term, unaccompanied assignments. The same is true for development work and personnel in any number of other government agencies. Postings abroad may be to challenging locations, but the assignment generally does not have the transitory characteristics of temporary duty.

Civilian deployment experience also

agency can make a case for its delineation, but since the regional boundaries differ, interagency planning that requires a regional approach may be complicated by the need for additional participants from multiple bureaus. Another example is the perception common in the military that other agencies do not plan. The reality is that they plan differently. The sequence of activities, the purposes for planning, and the time horizons they address present challenges in whole-of-government integration.

A development agency may have as its priority setting the conditions for planning and executing development programs across sectors, with the sectors weighted if not prioritized. If specific sectors in an interagency response predominate, decision makers will undoubtedly find it challenging to ensure the less-prevalent agencies receive adequate attention.

Whole-of-government planners often speak of “cross-cutting” issues, and the implementation of programs to achieve goals that cross domains will often require designing initiatives that depart from typical agency programs. As a component in a complex response, such an initiative requires buy-in from stakeholders and recognition from contributors to other components. Country teams are accustomed to such overviews but often find their program funds have been designed with other priorities in mind. Consequently, coordination among country-team members in embassies requires feedback loops to interagency planners in Washington as well.

Whole-of-government responses to foreign challenges provide more than a broad array of expertise and program options to address R&S. In planning such responses, the participation of personnel from multiple agencies helps ensure that issues across domains receive due attention. The military’s blind spot regarding the need for police provides a case in point. If the planners of an intervention include staff with an interest in local security, the need for police is more

likely to receive attention. Expand this example to other domains, and with appropriate agency participation, the resulting response uses more elements of national power. But the likelihood of agency integration depends on a host of factors, from shared interests and their recognized limits to pre-crisis exercise participation.

Similarly, adding NGOs and the private sector to the mix of respondents to R&S challenges facilitates a more-comprehensive approach to problem solving but inserts

**From the planning perspective, the military...should not refer to NGOs as partners because that term may threaten humanitarian space.**

additional perspectives. Just as the term “irregular warfare” may antagonize civilian participants in a stability operation, the concept of unity of effort loses relevance beyond government agencies.

The NGO community has negotiated guidelines for relationships between humanitarian organizations and the U.S. military that seek to preserve the independence of humanitarian activities from state-sponsored policy objectives. Among the measures the NGO community sought is the clear identification of military personnel as such when they deliver relief supplies (i.e., they are not to be confused with relief workers). From the planning perspective, the military—and by extension in an interagency environment, the government as a whole—should not refer to NGOs as partners because that term may threaten humanitarian space. Clearly from USAID’s use of NGOs as implementing partners, these partner NGOs are not seeking a similar distance. But other NGOs

as well as civilian industry will often contribute to an activity or policy goal most productively when government agencies acknowledge limits to common interests.

## **Size of Footprint**

The complaint of militarization of foreign affairs derives from the predominance of military planning for an intervention (benign or otherwise). Even when a military combatant command is clearly in a support role, the number of available military staff and its culture of élan in planning easily overwhelm consideration of various civil-sector requirements. As an organization, a military force not engaged in an operation uses its time to prepare for future employment. Few civilian organizations have this opportunity, which is necessary in developing a deployment culture. A measure of the scarcity of civilian response structure is evident when military commands seek participation in their exercises from civilian agencies and nongovernmental and international organizations. Civilian agencies can seldom spare personnel from their daily jobs to take part in exercises. The importance of doing so, however, is becoming increasingly clear, as government agencies consider the interests at stake if military staff must plan without the participation of civilian-agency counterparts.

## **Conclusion**

Bureaucratic structures cannot easily escape the tendency to ascribe programs to particular agencies rather than to a comprehensive management team. Indeed, the authorities individual agencies have to expend funds do not lead naturally to interagency coordination. Is a development agency coordinating its activity with a counterinsurgency effort? If a military commander is seeking to direct resources to a particular village to gain its support for the national government, are the political repercussions of choosing one or another location for a project evaluated by the aid agency of the sponsoring government and at appropriate levels of the host government? Both fiscal accountability and strategic planning dictate that policy, plans, program execution, and evaluation be coordinated across sectors at multiple levels.

Complex challenges require a diversity of skills across domains of societal activity, and appropriate skills are usually resident in multiple agencies. Consequently, expertise for a given task may be drawn from one agency in one month and another two months later. In creating solutions to challenges and evaluating results, the expertise is more important than the parent agency. Execution may be apportioned among several agencies, reflecting local conditions as well as legislative authority to conduct specific activities.

Whole-of-government coordination requires agency interoperability no less than a multilateral military defense requires both interoperable forces and a mutual interest in the desired end state. In the interagency environment, contributing agencies must deploy with resources adequate to their working conditions. If agencies with a small footprint in a given operation must depend on the military for transportation, communications, or sustainment, they are hampered in their ability to coordinate with their parent agencies and each other. If they must rely on the military, they will quickly recognize an inherent need to demonstrate their contributions to military priorities. Consequently the development of a CRC has sought to create the capacity for self-sustainability.

The U.S. has come far in this journey of applying the lessons of joint military operations to the whole-of-government approach. But because of differences in vocabulary, theoretical constructs, and security systems, it is still deconflicting disparate systems. Common experience, shared

understanding, and goodwill have set the U.S. en route to a stage of self-synchronizing activities across agencies striving to reach a common foreign-policy goal. The CRC already has a number of successes to relate, but the task of balancing the contribution of multiple agencies is likely to be a constant challenge. **IAJ**

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# Interagency Collaboration on the *High Seas*

**by Brian Wilson**

**O**n November 23, 1970, a Lithuanian sailor desperate to defect to the United States leapt spectacularly from the deck of a Soviet ship onto a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) cutter. After discussions among U.S. government departments failed to produce a coordinated response, a Coast Guard commander gave the 40-year old sailor back to the Soviets. Simas Kudirka did not go easily though; several Soviet “seamen” had to beat him into submission, all while aboard a U.S. military vessel off Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts. When the Soviets finally departed the Coast Guard ship with their would-be defector wrapped in a blood-drenched blanket, it was widely believed Kudirka was dead.<sup>1</sup>

News of the event spread quickly. A *New York Times* editorial asserted the forcible removal of Kudirka is “surely one of the most disgraceful incidents ever to occur on a ship flying the American flag.” The *Washington Post* declared, “No more sickening and humiliating an episode in international relations has taken place within memory...”

Presidential outrage and Congressional hearings soon followed. Bad decisions certainly led to the outcome, but equally bad coordination among federal departments contributed, as well. Kudirka’s botched asylum request importantly served as a catalyst to address an arcane but vitally important aspect of governance: How to ensure the timely alignment of federal agency action.

The details of the Kudirka story are well documented as the subject of eight Congressional hearings, two books, and an Emmy-award winning TV movie. In 1970, cell phones, instant messaging, e-mails, and Blackberries were still years away. There existed few 24-hour national-level federal agency command/operations centers and certainly no clear guidance regarding when departments should consult with one another. What emerged from the ashes of the Kudirka incident was a presidential directive mandating a stronger, more integrated interagency. The current interagency process is far from perfect; at times it can be cumbersome and bureaucratic, at other times, amazingly agile. The salience of the Kudirka incident, detailed below, lives on through

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a contemporary mechanism for interagency coordination—the Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) Plan.

## **Simas Kudirka**

Kudirka found himself off Martha's Vineyard because the Soviets had finally agreed to a bilateral meeting with the U.S. to discuss the volume of flounder being snagged by their fisherman off the U.S. coast. Bad weather changed the plans for an underway meeting in international waters, and U.S. and Soviet vessels proceeded to U.S. territorial waters where they anchored next to each other.

At one point in the day, Kudirka threw a crumpled note hidden in a pack of cigarettes onto the USCG cutter Vigilant manifesting his intent to defect to the U.S. The Vigilant's executive officer immediately and correctly notified higher headquarters and sought guidance to the possibility Kudirka might attempt to defect by jumping into the water and swimming toward the Vigilant. Should the Americans try to beat the Soviets to the rescue? Should Kudirka be treated as a deserter or asylum-seeker? Do other U.S. agencies/departments need to be notified?

Finding the appropriate State Department contact consumed several hours. Once reached, he refused to provide definitive policy or guidance to the Coast Guard, characterizing the potential asylum situation as a "sticky question."<sup>2</sup> Coast Guard policies on asylum were not clearly delineated at the time, and the State Department official neglected to share basic guidance for handling such a request.<sup>3</sup> There were other challenges, including the senior intelligence officer at Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C. not being allowed to see the Vigilant's message because he was not on the "cleared list." Operating errors on ship transmissions further delayed the dissemination of critical information regarding the situation.

Then Kudirka did the unexpected: Rather than jumping in the water, he leapt from the

deck of the Soviet vessel onto the Vigilant. This new development generated a renewed request for guidance. In response, the acting commander of the First Coast Guard District, Captain Fletcher W. Brown, Jr., again called Admiral William B. Ellis at home, but on convalescent leave. Admiral Ellis did not believe it would be productive to again seek guidance from Washington, D.C. and provided decisive but inaccurate direction, labeling

**What emerged from the ashes of the Kudirka incident was a presidential directive mandating a stronger, more integrated interagency.**

Kudirka a deserter who must be returned if the Soviets made a request.<sup>4</sup> Captain Brown then conveyed the order to the Commanding Officer of the Vigilant. Because the Vigilant's secure communications systems were inoperable, the ship used unclassified transmissions, easily accessed by the Soviets. Within minutes of the cutter's radio transmissions, the Soviet's requested Kudirka's return.

The Vigilant's commanding officer continued to raise concerns to his chain of command until he was blasted with the following, unambiguous edict, which he followed: "You have no discretion! You have your orders! Use whatever force is necessary! Do not let an incident occur!"<sup>5</sup> The Vigilant's captain told the Soviets, "He's all yours," as Kudirka screamed, "No, no...Russians... Killing...Siberia." Kudirka sought to evade capture but was apprehended by Soviet seamen on board Vigilant, who took turns hitting and kicking Kudirka, at times, in front of the cutter's officers and enlisted crew. Because the two ships had now separated from each other and were underway, the Coast Guard transported the

Soviet seamen, with a visibly injured Kudirka, to their vessel.

Kudirka may have been assaulted and ferried back to the Soviet Union, but he did not die. Four years later in his first meeting with the Soviets, President Gerald Ford shocked his staff, including Henry Kissinger, by disregarding its advice and requesting the Soviets release Kudirka. The Soviets unexpectedly complied.

**The [Presidential Directive] 27 process was extensively used and aligned U.S. government courses of action in more than 3,000 incidents from 1978 to 2005.**

### **The Presidential Directive 27 Process**

The Coast Guard and State Department separately developed interim procedures after the Kudirka incident for handling requests for political asylum by foreign nationals. In part, the interim guidance provided: “Under no circumstances should the person seeking asylum be arbitrarily or summarily returned to foreign jurisdiction or control pending determination of his status.” In 1972, the State Department formalized its policy for dealing with requests for asylum by foreign nationals.

In January 1978, a Presidential Directive was approved for handling non-military incidents, such as the one involving Kudirka. Presidential Directive 27 (PD 27) “Procedures for Dealing with Non-Military Incidents” covered a broader scope of issues than just asylum and sought to create a uniform and clearly understood process for responding to non-military incidents that could have an adverse impact upon the conduct of U.S. foreign relations. PD 27 did not define “adverse impact,” but did provide detailed guidance regarding implementation, such as the requirement to maintain a 24-

hour watch, the process to inform agencies of an incident, protocols in the event of a disagreement regarding the proposed course of action, and designation of the Department of State Operations Center as the central point of contact.

The PD 27 process was intended to apply to all non-military incidents that could adversely impact U.S. foreign relations, but in practice, it became an interagency mechanism employed primarily to address the government’s response to migrants and drug traffickers in the maritime domain. PD 27 issues included diplomatic engagements with foreign nations, investigative challenges, prosecution options, and operational concerns.

The PD 27 process was extensively used and aligned U.S. government courses of action in more than 3,000 incidents from 1978 to 2005. While integrated operations centers were a critical component of interagency coordination, the PD 27 process also (and consistently) brought together subject matter experts from the Departments of State and Justice; the Coast Guard; and at times, the Department of Defense. For over 25 years, this process proved to be a pioneering mechanism to ensure unity of effort, but as with any decision-making process, it relied on timely and accurate information, as well as training/awareness at the operational level as illustrated by the following examples.

In 1985, Miroslav Medvid, a Ukrainian merchant seaman sought asylum after jumping from his Soviet ship and swimming to shore near the Port of New Orleans.<sup>6</sup> In this case, information did not effectively or expeditiously flow from the operational to national level. Once ashore, two border patrol officers, “made the inexplicable decision...that Medvid had not been seeking asylum and should be returned to his ship.”<sup>7</sup> There was a subsequent interview of Medvid, a legislative/executive branch clash, and sensational allegations, but Medvid, like Kudirka, ultimately departed U.S. waters on a

Soviet vessel. Also like Kudirka, the facts of this defection request are well-documented.

Congress held four hearings to examine its circumstances and directed an investigation that included more than 200 interviews. The PD 27 process was addressed in the report, but Congress primarily focused on the adequacy of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) asylum procedures and operational-level decisions and actions.

A second case illustrating the importance of timely and accurate information occurred in 1991 when the USCG, through the PD 27 process, sought interagency concurrence to request foreign state approval to board a coastal vessel (M/V Nordic) suspected of carrying drugs. Difficulties with conducting a thorough at-sea boarding in international waters led to the Honduran-flagged ship being directed to port in St. Marc, Haiti, where Coast Guard personnel discovered drugs on board the vessel. As the Nordic was now in Haitian territory, the Haitian government requested and received U.S. consent to take custody of Bram Coumou, the ship's master and owner. Coumou, who was confined by Haitian authorities for six months until his acquittal, sued the U.S. government for negligent conduct, among other things, and requested damages for his arrest and confinement.

Situation reports and related memoranda before the PD 27 process participants—which failed to reflect that Coumou was an American citizen who had made the request for a boarding several days earlier and was cooperative during the boarding and offloading of cargo—was held by the court to be “grossly deficient and inaccurate.” The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district judge’s finding that the government was liable for personal injury and property damage but remanded the case, “to determine whether the government’s failure to convey information to Haitian authorities constituted a breach of its duty of reasonable

care.”<sup>88</sup>

In contrast to the Medvid and Coumou cases, the prohibitive majority of incidents addressed through the PD 27 process quietly, effectively, and efficiently aligned U.S. government responses to migrants and drug traffickers. Noted criminal law expert Eugene Fidell asserted the PD 27 process, “certainly seems to have had a positive impact...In almost three decades since it went into effect, the process has become an integral part of federal interagency operations. Fortunately, it was in place as the maritime war against drugs began in earnest [as well as] when illegal maritime migration began to present a significant threat in the 1980s...”<sup>89</sup>

### **Following the events of September 11, 2001, interagency alignment expanded significantly...**

### **The Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) Plan**

Following the events of September 11, 2001, interagency alignment expanded significantly with the creation of a process that directed agency coordination for the U.S. government response to drug trafficking, illegal migrants, and fishing incursions, as well as certain military incidents and newly identified maritime threats. The PD 27 process addressed “nonmilitary incidents” whereas the new plan addresses “maritime threats.”

Efforts to draft the Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) Plan spanned six months, with approximately a dozen representatives from multiple agencies meeting weekly. Key objectives of the working group were to address the scope of the threat and develop a plan that supported a “whole of

government” response to the full spectrum of maritime threats. Importantly, the plan created a construct that both mandated coordination and protected agency authorities.

An interim MOTR process was first implemented in 2005 and then finalized in October 2006 as one of eight maritime plans, along with the National Strategy on Maritime Security, directed by National Security Presidential Directive 41/Homeland Security Presidential Directive 13. The Presidential Directive provided, in part, that the Maritime Threat Response plan would ensure the “seamless United States Government response to maritime threats against the United States...”

The MOTR Plan, which has been called a process that is *used by all, owned by none*, brings together multiple departments for discussions and decisions through integrated national-level command/operations centers. The rank, grade, and position of agency representatives is within

**The [Maritime Operational Threat Response] Plan, which has been called a process that is *used by all, owned by none*, brings together multiple departments for discussions and decisions through integrated national-level command/operations centers.**

the prerogative of the agency but generally includes commanders and captains, and their civilian equivalents, Government Service 14s and 15s. Lieutenants and lieutenant commanders, as well as senior executive service, admirals, generals, departmental deputy assistants, and ambassadors, have at times, participated. Because MOTR is a flexible process that is unique to each case, coordination activities can be unclassified or classified and can include as

few as four to more than fifty representatives.

Aligning federal action and securing international cooperation in the vast maritime environment is especially critical as most threats involve multiple countries. The President’s 2010 National Security Strategy noted: “To succeed, we must update, balance, and integrate all of the tools of American power and work with our allies and partners to do the same.”

Collectively, \$700 billion in merchandise move through U.S. ports and waterways annually. On a global scale, approximately 75 percent of transnational trade moves by water, and more than two-thirds of the world’s surface is comprised of ocean. The maritime domain represents a, “global maritime transportation network including U.S. facilities and waters [where]...insecurity in one element can adversely affect security throughout the system.”<sup>10</sup>

Data from just one of the agencies that could be involved in MOTR underscores the need for a national coordinating mechanism in the maritime domain. In its 2009 annual performance report, the USCG noted it removed more than 350,000 pounds of cocaine headed to the U.S., interdicted approximately 3,700 undocumented migrants attempting to illegally enter the U.S., and conducted over 5,400 fisheries conservation boardings. Any one of those boardings or interdictions could involve multiple agencies and result in national-level coordination activities in accordance with the MOTR Plan and its protocols.

One potential threat that required an integrated response involved an Asian country that had received a radiation detector as part of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Megaports initiative. Ambiguous signals from the detection equipment raised the possibility that undocumented nuclear material was being transported in the maritime domain. Several agencies combined with international efforts to successfully locate and verify the legitimacy

of 17 suspected containers scattered among 14 ships.<sup>11</sup>

Another case that required interagency coordination involved a foreign-flagged tank vessel en route to the U. S. in 2005. There were reports of potential links between the vessel's owner and terrorist organizations. The vessel was in poor materiel condition and had not made a port call in the U.S. in approximately 15 years. The vessel operated exclusively in the Middle East and was carrying liquid urea, a fertilizer which could have a legitimate commercial purpose or potentially be used as an explosive.<sup>12</sup>

The possibility of a national security threat led to interagency discussions regarding the desired national outcome and courses of action. Agencies brought multiple views, including the need to identify and respond to the threat as far from the U.S. as possible, concern over disrupting commercial trade, questions regarding whether an at-sea boarding would damage the ongoing investigation, and uncertainty about the implications of the boarding (in bilateral and international venues). Interagency participants agreed to courses of action that included requesting flag state confirmation of registry and consent to the boarding, which was expeditiously granted. A boarding and inspection and interviews with crewmembers occurred approximately 900 miles from the U. S. coast, which along with other actions enabled the U.S. government to confirm the legitimacy of the shipment and authorize its port entry.

In yet another case, the MOTR process facilitated discussions, decisions, and actions following the attack on M/V Maersk Alabama, a cargo ship transporting food aid for Somalia. The boarding by Somali pirates represented the first time an American-flagged vessel had been hijacked in more than 150 years. Three pirates departed the ship with Captain Richard Phillips. MOTR coordination activities occurred within hours of the hijacking. Representatives from the

Departments of State, Justice, Defense (which included the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and Combatant Commands), Transportation, and Homeland Security, as well as the intelligence community and other government agencies participated.

Secure video teleconferences were held twice daily over six days to connect senior U.S. government officials on three continents. The MOTR process facilitated expeditious and transparent information dissemination, interagency concurrence on desired national outcomes, and alignment of courses of action. Following the dramatic rescue of Captain Phillips by U.S. Special Operations Forces, collaboration was also necessary to bring the

**The Global MOTR Coordination Center (GMCC) was established in February 2010 to support U.S. interagency MOTR partners and to serve as a national MOTR coordinator and its executive secretariat.**

surviving pirate to the U. S. for trial.

The successful response to the hijacking sparked efforts to create a single office dedicated to managing the MOTR process. The Global MOTR Coordination Center (GMCC) was established in February 2010 to support U.S. interagency MOTR partners and to serve as a national MOTR coordinator and its executive secretariat. While the MOTR process has existed since 2005, the GMCC, with an office of six (four civilians and two active duty military officers), was tasked with providing trained and dedicated facilitators; institutionalizing MOTR structure and processes; maintaining MOTR protocols; assisting with MOTR war games and exercises; and capturing MOTR lessons learned and best practices.

In GMCC's first eight months, the MOTR process facilitated the disposition of several instances of piracy, more than 80 separate migrant events, 100 law enforcement cases, and apprehended 70 detainees.

One of those cases occurred in September 2010 following the rescue of the hijacked M/V Magellan Star, when agencies turned to the MOTR process to deal with multiple investigative, diplomatic, and prosecution issues. In another case, when a distressed vessel capsized in the Gulf of Aden, the migrants were brought aboard a U.S. Navy vessel. The MOTR process was again employed to facilitate national-level discussions, decisions and agreed-upon courses of action regarding their transfer to land.

The MOTR process has been effective because of several key enablers: clear national-level guidance; strong agency involvement and support at all levels; frequent training and informational briefs; development of detailed "protocols" (operational guidance); and familiarization. MOTR participants generally work together on a daily basis and thus have awareness of issues, authorities, and concerns of their interagency colleagues even before they are raised in a MOTR call.

MOTR process representatives have sought to improve awareness and training through an annual "war game" at the Naval War College in Newport, RI. This two-day exercise has addressed current and emerging issues and agency roles and responsibilities, as well as gaps and seams. More than 25 training and familiarization briefings conducted in 2010 have raised awareness and proved instrumental in ensuring senior-level, as well as operational (including command watch centers) awareness and support. MOTR training is also occurring at military service academies to familiarize the next generation of military leaders with details of the plan and how it is implemented at the operational level. In addition, GMCC representatives have met with officials from foreign governments to discuss national-level coordinating mechanisms and the interagency process.

Interagency involvement in the MOTR process is reflected in coordination activities as well as through membership on the Current Operations Implementation Team (COIT), which functions as the MOTR Plan's board of directors. Frequently, COIT members are the participants in coordination activities. With meetings approximately every six weeks, the COIT discusses MOTR cases, issues with the process, and recommendations for refinement.

The MOTR protocols provide pre-planned responses to specific types of cases, the script for a call, subject matter experts in each agency, and agency command/operations center contact information. Interagency review of the protocols occurs annually. This review process and the document it produces enable MOTR calls to occur with a level of consistency as difficult policy questions are addressed.

## **Interagency Reform and Educational Initiatives**

The MOTR process is just one mechanism to ensure coordination. As long as there are separate agencies with separate authorities, missions, capabilities, and training there will be a need to improve coordination. Strengthening the interagency process and establishing training and professional development requirements have recently received considerable attention.

In response to Congressional direction to examine the national security interagency system, the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR) produced several impressive studies calling for systemic change. In addition to a comprehensive study on building an integrated national security professional system, PNSR released a sweeping report in 2008, "Forging a New Shield." PNSR remarked in the 2008 report that: "The U.S. position of world leadership, our country's prosperity

and priceless freedoms, and the safety of our people are challenged not only by a profusion of new and unpredictable threats, but by the now undeniable fact that the national security system of the United States is increasingly misaligned with a rapidly changing global security environment.”

In September 2010, Congressmen Ike Skelton and Geoff Davis introduced legislation (H.R. 6249) to revamp interagency national security education, development, and coordination. Separately, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College has developed an interagency studies program, as has the University of Kansas and other schools and universities.

## Conclusion

Institutionalizing collaboration is more than just a maritime challenge: it is a governance challenge. Forty years after the Kudirka episode, an enduring lesson is that communication, coordination, training, and leadership are critical to ensuring timely national-level alignment and information sharing. Horizontal coordinating mechanisms, such as the one used by the MOTR process, have application in other areas of federal government operations. The continued development and growth of constructs that require agencies to communicate, coordinate, and exchange information will require considerable attention, focus, and support and specifically well-defined authorities, direction, training, and education. **IAJ**

## NOTES

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# Worth Noting

## **DoD Commission to Assess Interagency National Security Knowledge and Skills**

On January 7, 2011, the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 became public law. The Act contained a provision requiring the Secretary of Defense to commission an appropriate, independent non-profit organization to conduct a study to assess the current state of interagency national security knowledge and skills of DoD civilians and uniformed personnel and make recommendations for strengthening such knowledge and skills.

At a minimum, the study will include assessments and recommendations on:

- Interagency national security training, education, and rotational assignment opportunities available to civilians and military personnel.
- Integration of interagency national security education into the professional military education system.
- Levels of interagency national security knowledge and skills possessed by personnel currently serving in civilian executive and general or flag officer position, as represented by the interagency education, training, and professional experiences they have undertaken.
- Incentives that enable and encourage military and civilian personnel to undertake interagency assignment, education, and training opportunities, as well as disincentives and obstacles that discourage undertaking such opportunities.
- Any plans or current efforts to improve the interagency national security knowledge and skills of civilian and military personnel.

For the purpose of this study, the term “interagency national security knowledge and skills” means an understanding of, and the ability to efficiently and expeditiously work within the structures, mechanisms, and processes by which the departments, agencies, and elements of the federal government that have national security missions coordinate and integrate their policies, capabilities, budgets, expertise, and activities to accomplish such missions.

The findings and recommendations of this study and assessment are to be reported to both congressional defense committees not later than December 1, 2011. **IAJ**

## **Reading List for Diplomats and Foreign Affairs Professionals**

The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and the President of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) have co-sponsored the creation of a Foreign Affairs Professionals reading list. The list is intended to serve as a career-long, self-directed professional development resource for Foreign Service and Civil Service employees of the foreign affairs agencies. The list was compiled in collaboration with AFSA; the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training; the State Department’s Ralph J. Bunche Library, Office of the Historian, and Office of E-Diplomacy; and regional and functional bureaus.

From this extensive listing, a small core group was designated as “Highly Recommended” books that are must-reads for any well-rounded foreign affairs professional. These are reprinted below:

- *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* – G.R. Berridge (4th Edition).
- *Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy* – Chas. W. Freeman, Jr.
- *Statecraft: And How to Restore America’s Standing in the World* – Dennis Ross.
- *Colossus: The Price of America’s Empire* – Niall Ferguson.
- *The Opportunity: America’s Moment to Alter History’s Course* – Richard Haass.
- *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* – Walter Russell Mead.
- *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* – Joseph Nye.
- *Dangerous Nation* – Robert Kagan.
- *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained & Wielded Global Dominance* – Michael H. Hunt.
- *Islam: A short History* – Karen Armstrong.
- *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* – Thomas L. Friedman.
- *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for our Time* – Jeffrey Sachs.
- *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* – Paul Kennedy.
- *The Cold War: A History* – John Louis Gaddis.
- *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America’s Military* – Dana Priest.
- *Diplomacy* – Henry Kissinger. **IAJ**

## **What the QDDR Says About Interagency Coordination**

by **Ted Strickler**

“Leading Through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review” (QDDR) released on December 15, 2010, is described by the State Department’s website as “a sweeping assessment of how the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) can become more efficient, accountable, and effective in a world where rising powers, growing instability, and technological transformation create new threats, but also new opportunities.” A common thread running throughout the 242 page document is the awareness of the critical need for greater, more effective interagency coordination and collaboration in order to deal with those challenges. The highlights of the most relevant comments in the QDDR dealing with interagency coordination issues are extracted and summarized below.

### ***Introduction and Executive Summary***

Secretary Clinton’s introduction to the QDDR sets the importance of interagency coordination center stage when she states that “...we will work to break down walls between agencies. We will

eliminate overlap, set priorities, and fund only the work that supports those priorities....We will give our Chiefs of Mission the tools they need to oversee the work of all U.S. government agencies working in their host country, essentially serving as the Chief Executive Officer of a multi-agency mission.”

The executive summary to the QDDR emphasizes the importance of “Civilian Power”, which it describes as U.S. civilians from all agencies working as a “seamless team” providing “the combined force of women and men across the U.S. government...strengthening alliances and partnerships, preventing and responding to crises and conflict, and advancing America’s core interests: security, prosperity, universal values—especially democracy and human rights—and a just international order...It is the civilian side of the government working as one, just as our military services work together as a unified force.”

### ***Civilian Power—A Need for Interagency Collaboration***

Stressing the important contribution made by interagency partners, the QDDR states: “At the heart of America’s civilian power are the men and women who work every day, many of them in dangerous and difficult circumstances, to advance our interests and values. Today, they include not just diplomats and USAID development experts, but also civilian specialists from other agencies and departments who have deep knowledge of key fields, such as public health, agriculture, justice, and law enforcement. These agencies and departments have their own mandates and objectives, which makes coordination all the more important.”

The QDDR goes on to say: “Properly organized and deployed, civilian power saves money and saves lives. But it is too often an undervalued and underused asset in the U.S. national security portfolio. The National Security Strategy makes clear that our goal is integrated power across every part of government. But that requires not only redressing the balance between military and civilian power, but also ensuring that U.S. civilian agencies can work together cooperatively and efficiently to maximize our collective impact.”

The QDDR underscores the importance of interagency coordination with the statement that State “will collaborate more effectively with other agencies, including the Departments of Treasury, Defense, Justice, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Energy, and Homeland Security, as well as the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, The United States Export-Import Bank, and the United States Trade and Development Agency.”

The QDDR adds the caveat: “Of course, nothing in the QDDR is intended to affect the existing authorities between and among other departments and agencies of the U.S. government.”

### ***Importance of the Chief of Mission***

The QDDR makes the point that “a striking element of the diplomatic landscape of the 21st century is the expanded role other government agencies have come to play in these bilateral relationships.” Consequently, the QDDR recognizes that “because a wide array of our government agencies increasingly engage with their counterparts abroad, our diplomats have to be prepared to lead the implementation of global civilian operations and to pursue whole-of-government diplomatic initiatives.”

Specifically, the QDDR calls for empowering Chiefs of Mission to more effectively direct

and supervise these efforts by ensuring they can contribute to the evaluation of all personnel from all agencies at post and that all U.S. civilians in-country have “clear reporting structures” to their parent organizations. In return, the QDDR states that the State Department will “prioritize interagency experience and talents for choosing and training Chiefs of Mission and Deputy Chiefs of Mission” by considering “how well candidates have worked with the interagency or managed multi-agency missions in previous postings.”

### ***Role of Other Agencies Elevated***

The QDDR recognizes that “the conduct of our foreign policy often requires the Department of State to draw on the skills, resources, and expertise of other agencies...As these instances increase, it is critical that we shift our mindset and operational approach. This means expanding our collaboration across the government to the expertise of other agencies in our program and policy implementation, training our diplomats to operate more effectively in the interagency, and enhancing our own capacity to carry out operations on the ground.” With regard to conflict situations, the QDDR maintains that “addressing the root causes of conflict demands a wide range of skill, expertise, and capabilities. While State and USAID have many of these, no single agency of the U.S. government has them all. Every federal agency has contributions to make to what must be a whole-of-government endeavor.”

The QDDR puts other agencies on notice by asserting that the State Department will “fundamentally change [its] management approach by turning to the expertise of other federal agencies where appropriate—before engaging private contractors.” “Specifically, State will enter into interagency agreements, consistent with existing law, to draw on the skills, expertise and personnel of other federal agencies before turning to private contractors where State determines that building in-house government capability or promoting bi-lateral working relationships furthers our foreign policy priorities.”

“In particular, given the national security implications of security sector assistance, State will look first to the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Homeland Security to implement State programs involving counterterrorism capacity building, foreign law enforcement, or strengthening justice and interior ministries. State will use private contractors for non-governmental functions when other agencies lack appropriate skills or are otherwise unwilling or unable to provide the services needed in an effective manner.”

This is seen as a “significant departure from current practice” that will save money, improve the ability “to advance American interests, and strengthen State’s engagement across the interagency” by helping all federal agencies “build lasting relationships with foreign counterparts” while reducing reliance on contractors.

### ***Interagency Training***

The QDDR acknowledges the need for enhanced interagency training. It notes that State needs to “understand and support” the core objectives of other agencies while engaging the scientific, technical, and programmatic expertise of other agencies operating abroad. The QDDR claims that “going forward, our personnel will receive enhanced training in interagency processes in both Washington and the field. To expand our personnel’s familiarity with other parts of the government, they will be encouraged and, to the extent possible, expected to undertake short-term

detail assignments in other agencies. As staffing numbers increase, we will expand the number of interagency detail assignments, allowing us over time to build a cadre of personnel expert in the mechanisms and objectives of other agencies. Successful engagement within the interagency will become an integral part of an individual's career development and promotion. We will also work with other agencies to expand the number of detail assignments to State."

### ***Dealing with Crisis and Conflict***

Conflict prevention and response within fragile states is described by the QDDR as a "core civilian mission of preventing conflict, saving lives, and building sustainable peace." The QDDR acknowledges that "for the past two decades, the U.S. government has recognized that U.S. national security depends upon a more effective approach [with] fragile states. Yet we have struggled with how to understand these challenges and how to organize our civilian institutions to deal with them." Further, "many of the capabilities and skills we need for conflict and crisis prevention and response exist at State, USAID, and other federal agencies, but these capabilities are not integrated and focused on the problem in a sustained way. We must more effectively work with the Defense Department, which has unparalleled logistical, operational, and personnel capacities to operate in complex crisis situations and the capacity and knowledge to help countries build effective, responsible military forces under civilian leadership."

To meet this obligation, the QDDR highlights the need for "clearly designated, accountable leadership within and between State and USAID, as well as complementary capabilities in each agency." It also states emphatically that "the United States must move from the rhetoric of multiagency response to its reality."

### ***International Operational Response Framework***

To implement this vision State will "help coordinate U.S. crisis response through a new international operational response framework, which will draw on the capabilities and expertise found across federal agencies and improve civil-military collaboration." To accomplish this, State and USAID will coordinate with interagency partners, through a National Security Staff led process, to develop an International Operational Response Framework (IORF) that establishes the systems and procedures necessary to ensure transparent and accountable leadership structures and agency lines of responsibility which, when combined, will leverage and deliver the full range of U.S. international disaster, crisis, and conflict response resources." "The IORF will draw on applicable elements from the widely-recognized National Incident Management System utilized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency when responding to domestic disasters as well as other international mechanisms. Like its domestic counterparts, the IORF will govern how the U.S. government conducts crisis response by addressing coordination among agencies, ensuring flexibility and speed in our response, and providing staffing to meet urgent needs."

### ***Cross-Agency Teams***

The QDDR goes on to underscore that "an essential component of an interagency civilian response to crisis and conflict is the ability to deploy cross-agency teams who understand one another's contributions and are able to work together on the ground." To achieve this, the QDDR lists the following contemplated actions:

- “Reforming the Civilian Deployment Center into a joint mechanism for deploying all civilian responders and a one-stop shop for equipment, medical needs, and training.
- “Combining the management offices at State and USAID for the Civilian Response Corps.
- “Providing more advanced joint training for responders in a range of conflict-related issues.
- “Augmenting Civilian Response Corps capacity to oversee projects in the field by enlisting staff from other agencies and increasing the number of contract representatives within the Corps.”

### ***Civil-Military Coordination***

With regard to civil-military operational collaboration, The QDDR says that “State and USAID will build upon and improve efforts to coordinate with the Department of Defense in the field.” For this effort to succeed, the QDDR lists the following requirements:

- “Expand the cadre of civilians who understand the principles and practice of civil-military cooperation and who have real experience working with the Department of Defense, both in Washington and in the field.
- “Integrate the military within the new International Operational Response Framework by working with the Department of Defense to develop clear roles and responsibilities on task forces and deployed teams, identify transition points between military and civilian leadership, and provide more civilian capacity at combatant commands and on joint task forces. We will also encourage our diplomats and development personnel to highlight the principles of U.S. civil-military relations abroad with their foreign counterparts.
- “Stand up the Congressionally authorized State-USAID-Department of Defense Advisory panel to ‘advise, review, and make recommendations on ways to improve coordination among the DoD, State, and USAID on matters related to national security, including reviewing their respective roles and responsibilities.’”

In addition, State will “adopt a whole-of-government approach that integrates the skills of other federal agencies—and, where, appropriate, state and local governments—in the design and implementation of security and justice-sector assistance.”

### ***Changes to the Organizational Chart***

The QDDR advances a number of organizational changes and realignments. One of the more noteworthy, from an interagency perspective, is the plan to reorganize the existing Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs into an Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. “The Under Secretary’s restructured mandate will be to build and oversee one coherent capacity within State that promotes stability and security in conflict-affected and fragile states, supports and develops democratic practices globally, and advances our human rights and humanitarian policies.” The Under Secretary will oversee the Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration, the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and a new Bureau for Crisis and Stabilization Operations that subsumes the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. The organizational location of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs remains an open question as the QDDR notes

that it has issues relevant to both the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights as well as the Under Secretary for Civilian Security and International Security.

The QDDR also proposes the creation of a new Bureau for Counterterrorism that “will elevate the office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, expand State’s capabilities in an issue critical to U.S. national security, and allow more effective coordination with other agencies, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the intelligence community.” The QDDR is unclear as to the proposed new bureau’s location on the State organization chart stating only that “the Bureau will have normal reporting lines for its main activities...and will have a direct report to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary for threats, operations, and related strategic considerations.”

### ***Relations with the Department of Defense***

In recognition of the need to become a stronger partner with DoD’s Combatant Commands (COCOMs), the QDDR says that State “will make available to the Department of Defense senior ambassador-ranked personnel as civilian deputies to Combatant Commanders in addition to existing Foreign Policy Advisors (POLADs)...These civilian deputies would complement, but not replace, military deputies necessary for operational chain of command and other Department of Defense-unique functions...Consistent with personnel availability, we [State] will welcome the opportunity to detail mid to senior-level State and USAID personnel to COCOMs to improve working-level cooperation with the Department of Defense. In addition, we [State] will pursue more regular joint strategic training and planning with the Department of Defense.”

### ***State-USAID Relations***

The importance of USAID and the enlarged role of development in the implementation of U.S. foreign policy is a central tenet of the QDDR. It states that “beyond Washington, USAID must play an expanded role in planning and decision-making in the field. USAID Missions and U.S. embassies will work together to advance development objectives and integrate development throughout our policies in country. To this end, USAID Mission Directors will serve as the primary development advisor to Chiefs of Mission, coordinate Country Team contributions to the Country Development Cooperation Strategies, and act as the lead for development cooperation in the field, except in a limited number of countries where the appointment of a Foreign Assistance Coordinator may be required.” The QDDR goes on to explain that over time, State “will seek to ensure that all State personnel receive training in how to coordinate U.S. government activities with multilateral development agencies; and we [State] will ensure that they recognize the importance of development in their diplomatic efforts, by incorporating development advocacy in performance requirements.”

### ***Training***

As noted throughout the QDDR “training must focus more on how to engage and coordinate other agencies as well as ensure their representatives are effectively integrated into a Mission’s Country Team. To foster these skills, we will increase rotational assignments to and where possible from other agencies at all levels in both State and USAID.” “We will also work with the Department of Defense and other agencies to leverage their capabilities and expertise as we train our personnel both to work with these agencies and to work in difficult environments. In addition, the President

has directed the National Security Staff to reinvigorate the National Security Professional Development program initiated with May 2007 Executive Order 13434. Currently 19 executive departments participate in the National Security Staff-led effort to define and draft a strategy to guide a National Security Professional Development program.”

### **Conclusion**

The QDDR states in its concluding chapter that “to integrate all the components of America’s power, we must make the whole-of-government mantra more real. Through the QDDR, State and USAID commit to supporting a true interagency system that brings together all the U.S. agencies active overseas. In so doing we must recognize and embrace the comparative advantages, institutional mandates, and unique contributions of each agency. The theme of interagency collaboration runs throughout all aspects of the QDDR. We will turn to the personnel of other agencies before turning to contractors. We will develop inclusive planning processes. We will prepare our personnel to operate effectively in the interagency through training and detail assignments. We will develop with agency partners a response framework that outlines interagency roles and responsibilities and procedures for planning and responding to crisis...Through this interagency collaboration we will deliver the integrated power America needs to lead in the world today.” **IAJ**

*Ted Strickler is the Executive Director of the Col. Arthur D. Simons Center.*

## **The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: What It Suggests for the Interagency – Outside Observations**

*by John Dyson*

When Senator Clinton became Secretary Clinton one of the first things she asked of the State Department was a copy of State’s four-year plan. As a member of the Senate’s Armed Services Committee, former Senator Clinton was familiar with the Defense Department’s Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), and now Secretary Clinton expected that State had a similar document that would help her understand State’s “short-, medium-, and long-term blueprint for diplomatic and development efforts.” Upon learning that there was no such document Secretary Clinton directed the Department to develop a Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). After a long gestation period, the first QDDR was published on December 15, 2010.

### **Outside Reviews**

Since its release, the QDDR has been reviewed by: 1) foreign policy observers looking for a guide to the Department of State ends, ways, and means to implement the Obama Administration’s diplomatic goals and objectives; 2) development-focused non-government organizations seeking the Administration’s vision on the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) activities in foreign assistance and development; and 3) foreign governments comparing the 2010 National Security Strategy, QDR, and QDDR to read the tea leaves on overall United States foreign policy.

Some observers note the impact the QDDR may have on federal policy, bureaucratic reorganization, and interagency directions. Others list several external challenges in implementing its goals, such as the need for interagency and inter-governmental action, including enabling legislation.

What follows is some of the commentary.

## ***Civ-Mil Stovepipes and Integrating the Administration's Foreign Policy Goals***

Anthony H. Cordesman (Center for Strategic and International Studies) notes the QDDR “fails to address the legacy of nearly a decade of failure on the part of the State Department, USAID, and the civil departments of the U.S. government to come to grips with the need to provide effective civilian partners in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.” He observes that “the need to create a more functional relationship between the State Department, USAID, the U.S. military, and the U.S. intelligence community is not analyzed in either crisis area or where more conventional partnerships with host countries need to be improved.” Cordesman points out that several Congressional reports and Special Inspectors General recommendations seem to have been ignored in the drafting of the QDDR while there are too many “buzzwords”, “laundry lists” of general good ideas and platitudes instead of concrete plans for action.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Budgetary Concerns***

Gordon Adams (Distinguished Fellow at the Stimson Center) notes that the QDDR goal faces several important challenges, not the least of which is a reallocation of resources from DoD war fighting operations and to State/USAID governance and conflict prevention activities. He blogs:

The review had led to a decision to beef up State and USAID capabilities to handle conflict prevention and conflict resolution, making this a core mission of the Department. The effort to create capabilities at State has been going on for about six years now, but this has never been a ‘core mission,’ just a way of delivering civilian bodies to Iraq and Afghanistan to work on reconstruction in the framework of a U.S. invasion and occupation... Conflict prevention and governance need to be skills every diplomat learns; they need to be core to key embassies, they need to be at the center of attention in State planning. Hopefully, some of that will happen as the new capacity is created in a restructured Under Secretary’s office. If it were fully implemented in the promised way, it would help DoD step back from the greatly expanded missions it has given itself to remake the world through stabilization and reconstruction operations.<sup>2</sup>

The QDDR discusses the possibility of a unified national security budget starting with interagency guidance from the National Security Council. InterAction, an alliance of U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations (NGO), explains of the QDDR: “With new mechanisms such as joint mission planning, pooled funding, and the potential creation of a unified Defense Department, State, and USAID national security budget, the QDDR plans to build on the existing system as well as increase efficiency and resource allocation.” However, it worries that an intertwined national security budget might “impact funding for poverty-based programs” that are not politically expedient for short-term national security interests.<sup>3</sup>

Laurie A. Garrett (Council on Foreign Relations Senior Fellow for Global Health) sees the difficult nature of these reforms, as she says the QDDR “creates a complicated set of networks and bridges across the entire government.”<sup>4</sup> Garrett also expresses concern that third-order effects of policy changes from USAID and the State Department functioning as “interwoven entities” may derail emphasis and funding for such things as global health.

### ***Cracking Heads Together – The Ambassador as CEO***

Gerald Hyman (Senior Advisor and President of Hills Program on Governance) discusses the challenges involved in actually empowering the U.S. ambassador as a multiagency CEO:

First, the U.S. ambassador is to be the CEO of the multiagency work in any country and will ‘direct and coordinate’ the civilian efforts there. The question is the extent to which the agencies working with funds not controlled by the State Department will be ‘directed and coordinated’ or, if not, what levers the ambassador will have and what the procedures will be for implementing coordination.<sup>5</sup>

Hyman’s question on whether the ‘Ambassadorial CEO’ can ever exercise full direction and coordination is a very poignant issue as the numbers of interagency players proliferate at embassies throughout the world. In strong support for the idea that ambassadors should exercise such power, Dr. Christopher Lamb of the Institute for National Strategic Studies and Ambassador (Ret) Edward Marks argue:

The inability of the President of the United States to delegate executive authority for integrating the efforts of departments and agencies on priority missions is a major shortcoming in the way the national security system of the U.S. government functions. Statutorily assigned missions combined with organizational cultures create ‘stovepipes’ that militate against integrated operations...Presidents have tried various approaches to solving the problem: National Security Council committees, ‘lead agencies,’ and ‘czars,’ but none have proven effective. Yet one precedent of a relatively successful cross-agency executive authority does exist: the Chief of Mission authority delegated to U.S. resident ambassadors. The Congress and White House could build on this precedent to provide the President greater ability to manage complex national security problems while strengthening congressional oversight of such missions.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Training Interagency Professionals***

Stephen Johnson (Contributor to Foreign Policy’s Shadow Government), observes regarding training of the government’s interagency professionals:

Quadrennial reviews are supposed to evaluate an institution’s fitness for accomplishing expected missions and responding to crises...But it seemed less an analytical assessment than a justification for steps the secretary had already taken. State’s desire to coordinate a growing menagerie of interagency actors in its embassies got coverage, but its evolving relationship with them was brief...Addressing the workforce, the QDDR takes on perhaps the biggest weakness of our foreign affairs establishment. Foreign Service officers (FSOs) may be the department’s elite, but they must suffer a dysfunctional personnel system and inadequate training. Many go to post with little more than an orientation course since there is no congressionally authorized training float...USAID must rebuild its corps of career experts lost as contractors replaced them over the last 20 years. Meanwhile, employee unions may generally oppose more flexible hiring practices.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Getting Congress on Board***

Although some QDDR recommendations have already been internalized within the State Department, many initiatives require acceptance by other departments and agencies, while others require enabling legislation or funding.

Co-Chairs of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) David Beckmann and George Ingram, opine, “These reforms would pay major dividends in terms of lives saved and improved around the world—and they would make sure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are getting into the hands of people who need them. But they will only have lasting impact if the Administration and bipartisan members of Congress work together to develop and pass legislation that establishes them in law.”<sup>8</sup>

Noam Unger (Brookings Institution Global Economy and Development Fellow) says much the same thing:

There is seemingly much to like about the QDDR, such as its well-placed focus on the role of women and girls in peace-building and development, but the review raises many questions. Ultimately, to make this type of review quadrennial in fact, rather than just in name, and to leave behind a legacy of institutional reform, the administration would do well to work closely with Congress.<sup>9</sup>

Sara Messer and Larry Nowels list three major challenges the QDDR faces in bringing about tangible change in the government’s interagency operations:

**Partnering with Congress:** While the funding landscape ahead is challenging, the reforms for greater efficiency and measurable results should appeal to a Congress looking to reduce the deficit and maximize the impact of government spending. The QDDR offers a blueprint that is ahead of this debate and the State Department and USAID should seize the opportunity to forge a positive association with lawmakers.

**Making tough decisions:** President Obama’s Global Development Policy called for greater focus on where the U.S. had comparative advantage and could make the most impact...But what has not been said is where the U.S. will pull back. Gaining consensus around where to cut will be difficult, but the QDDR does not help us understand where that might take place.

**Harmonizing foreign assistance:** The report defines ‘civilian power’ as including all U.S. government agencies, not just State and USAID. But breaking down entrenched bureaucratic priorities and convincing all agencies to work under the leadership of USAID on development assistance will be daunting...The QDDR takes a leap towards streamlining and modernizing U.S. foreign assistance. Now the hard work of implementation begins.<sup>10</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

Anthony H. Cordesman critiqued, “The QDDR should have been a frank and critical effort that examined case studies in the failure to plan for effective civil and stability operations before each war, to execute effective civil operations during the initial invasions, and to develop and improve programs in the years that followed. Instead it fails to address problems that have denied the military the civil partners they need to effectively support both wars.”

While acknowledging this critique, this is the first State Department QDDR and sets benchmarks for the future rather than examining every recent decision on the genesis and conduct of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The internal State Department and USAID struggles during the development of the QDDR suggest that the process was sorely needed. The forward-looking

challenge for the QDDR is that it not become yet another ‘vacuous government report’ destined to collect dust on the bookshelf of the written and unread reports of the past.

Concerns about the comingling of development, diplomacy, and defense budgets are understandable. Whilst Secretary Gates has repeatedly expressed preferences for additional funds for diplomacy and development (stability, conflict resolution, nation building, etcetera), Congress has not followed his budgetary advice outside the Defense Department. On one hand, tying the budgets for defense, diplomacy, and development could have the effect of protecting all three from arbitrary cuts. However, there is no guarantee that Congress would not reallocate funds from the development or the diplomacy budgets to the defense budget when strict and immediate national security benefits are not immediately apparent. It is also doubtful that tying these budgets together would bring about rationalization in Congressional oversight, especially considering that since the amalgamation of agencies that went into the creation of the Department of Homeland Security has resulted in over 100 Congressional committees and subcommittees overseeing the DHS budget and management process.<sup>11</sup>

The better test for the QDDR is whether it leads to continued review of foreign policy and the Departments of State, Defense, USAID, and other interagency players in diplomacy and development, and more importantly, an integrated, cohesive, whole-of-government foreign policy that serves U.S. national interests in the 21st century. This metric is ongoing, and progress will be judged based on how the administration socializes with Congress to move forward from this starting point. This executive and legislative dance requires both partners to move their feet, the interagency orchestra to play the tunes, and the State Department to increase America’s confidence in its core diplomatic competencies. **IAJ**

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## NOTES

- 1 [http://csis.org/files/publication/101221\\_QDDR\\_Review.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/101221_QDDR_Review.pdf)
- 2 <http://www.capitalgainsandgames.com/blog/gordon-adams/2078/state-department-steps-show-me-money>
- 3 <http://www.interaction.org/article/reading-fine-print-qddr>
- 4 [http://www.cfr.org/publication/23653/weighing\\_an\\_ambitious\\_qddr.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/23653/weighing_an_ambitious_qddr.html)
- 5 <http://csis.org/publication/qddr-new-language-same-focus>
- 6 <http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/strategic-perspectives/StrategicPerspectives-2%20.pdf>
- 7 [http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/12/21/qddr\\_no\\_bulls\\_eye\\_but\\_generally\\_on\\_target](http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/12/21/qddr_no_bulls_eye_but_generally_on_target)
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- 9 [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/1216\\_qddr\\_unger.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/1216_qddr_unger.aspx)
- 10 <http://one.org/blog/2010/12/20/making-good-rhetoric-reality-implementing-the-qddr/>
- 11 <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128650264>









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